

JULY, 1913

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The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



In
This
Number

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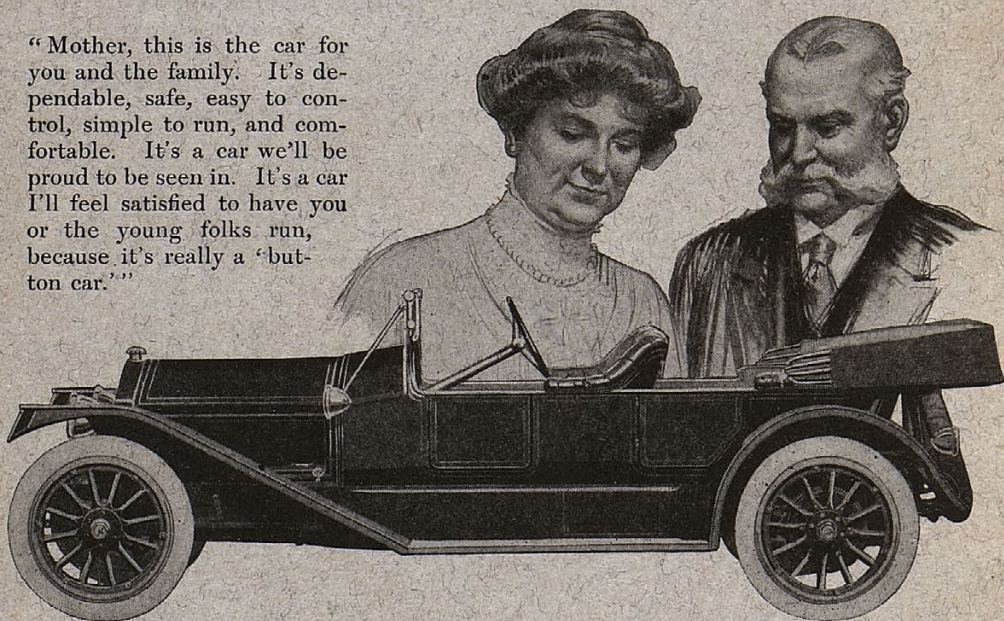
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A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT, *Editor*

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THE AUGUST SMART SET

THE August number of THE SMART SET will follow hard on the pace set by the four previous issues, which have high-hurdled all the conventional bounds that mark off the course of the usual conservative American periodical.

"The Inn of Youth," a story of the intensest realism, by Julius Grinnell Furthmann, will lead off the August number. Here is no pandering to timid sentimentalities, but a grim, brutal presentation of a picture of present day family life in certain quarters of our large cities. A picture that the reader will carry impressed upon his brain for many days.

"Her Reputation," the complete novelette in this issue, is by Beatrix Demarest Lloyd, a writer whose work has always enjoyed immense popularity among readers of THE SMART SET. This story concerns a popular actor and his secret marriage to a woman with whom his manager is also in love. On the chances of discovery hinges his career as a "star." How a railroad wreck intervenes to work out the domestic salvation of the pair makes a story of thrill and provides a climax of tremendous surprise.

Louise Closser Hale, whose novelette, "Her Soul and Her Body," in this magazine, made such a hit last year, contributes to the August number a story of French seaport life, "Strong Women," which recalls the situation immortalized by Hawthorne in "The Scarlet Letter."

"Miss Fortune" is George Bronson Howard's next story in his "Pages from the Book of Broadway" series. Those who have read his preceding stories realize that here is a writer who knows his

Broadway and is presenting it shorn of its usual glamour and artificial adornments. This series is being widely accepted as revealing the true inwardness of the Great White Way.

"The Fellowship Oath," by Ernest Starr, takes us back to the earliest days of Christianity in Northern Europe. In the midst of the struggles between the followers of the new creed and the adherents to the old gods, a charming love story is woven. This is romance of a high order.

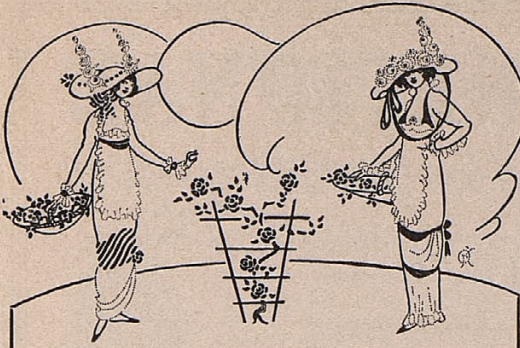
H. L. Mencken continues his trenchant, satirical articles on "The American." In August he will describe the American's language—the form of speech of the strange individual he has picked out as the typical American.

"Jerry," by Barry Benefield, is the best description of a Southern lynching that we have ever read—a story that is one continued thrill.

"A Flight," by Edith Orr, is an aeroplane story, the scene of which is laid at one of the great aviation meets in France; and concerns a noted airman and a society woman who insists on going up for a flight. The real climax of this story occurs a thousand feet or so in the air.

Some unusual verse will be found in this number. Richard Burton, Witter Bynner, George Sterling, Joyce Kilmer and Louis Untermeyer will be among the contributors. Owen Hatteras's department of satire and the literary and dramatic critiques of H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan will present distinctly novel features.

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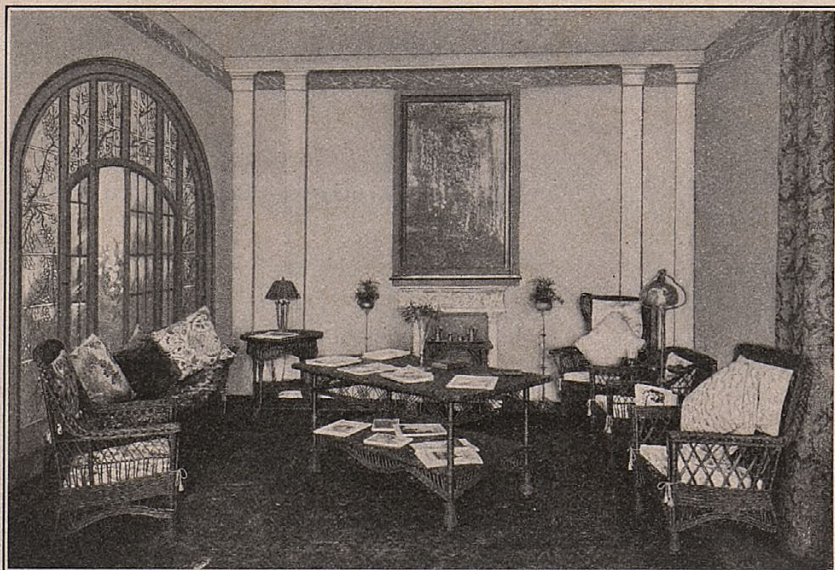
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THE SMART SET

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THE MAN WITH THE BROKEN FINGERS

By Harris Merton Lyon

HE stumbled on down through the leafy glade, leaping wildly from spot to spot until at last he lay panting with fright and exhaustion behind a clump of underbrush. Saliva dripped from his rigid, half-open lips, and the sunlight, dancing in among the branches, flecked with its yellow the curious bumps and atrophied ridges of his swart face. His grotesque features had something odd about them, something of the deep-scarred lineaments of the lion. His ears, frightfully puffed and thick, resembled the ears of a pugilist. One of them was cocked intently toward the wind. He listened.

Over the peaceful hills came a faint tumult, waning fainter. It was the unpleasant "Yah! Yah!" of a human mob. But they were going.

He stirred slightly amid the leaves and then, suddenly weak, rested prone and relaxed, his head upon a bank of damp moss. The warm sun of a Virginia afternoon made the whole air drowse and drape itself listlessly, as a tegument, over the landscape. Bees, stupid with heat, moved slowly at their ancient work about him. Blue-winged and bellied flies clung to the bare rocks in torpor.

"Damn 'em," he said, in a thick,

hoarse voice as he peered out in the direction from which he had been running. "Damn 'em all! Wot the hell's the use o' all this?"

His face, while he spoke, showed no change of expression, no emotion, no facile transposition of his features, but remained as set, as impassive as a horrid papier-mâché mask.

He thought to himself, it ought to be an old story to him by this time. He thanked his stars he had had something to eat before they ran him off. He looked at the sun, and decided he had better do his sleeping now and his traveling tonight. He thus apathetically dismissed the whole affair and rolled over, at once dozing away to the lullaby of innumerable crooning insects in the wood. The sky changed from gold to red-gold, then to purple, then to dusky mauve, then to a deep ultramarine; and the man slept on.

It was midnight when he awoke. The moon shone full from a well of blue, and soft night noises filled the grove and the hills. He arose stiffly, pushing aside a branch in order to get a clearer impression of the neighborhood. As he did so the glistening light fell silently upon his right hand, revealing there five stumps, half-fingers, abruptly broken

off and neatly healed. When he drew his cap down on his head, his left hand showed a similar condition. Slowly, with a sigh, he fumbled for his pipe, clumsily packed it full of tobacco, lit it, and struck out across the country toward the north, his legs sore and stiff from the long rest. By morning he was twelve miles away and hungry again. But there was a village near at hand.

This he approached warily and paused. It was then nine o'clock and the streets before him stirred aimlessly with pastoral life. A rickety old wagon and a drooping, disconsolate horse stood against a neighboring shed as if to aid by their presence the notion of village somnolence and repose. A woman was bustling around in a back yard, her mouth full of clothespins as she hung her wash upon the line.

"Huh! This looks all right," he said half aloud to himself, as he shambled up to beg his breakfast. But the very moment he leaned across the fence and opened his mouth to speak, the woman glanced at him, threw up her hands in fright, as one who has seen an apparition, dropped clothes and clothespins, and in a frenzy rushed to the shelter of her kitchen.

The man's grimacing, hideous face trembled and twitched. He waited, heavily. At last a pair of scared eyes peered at him from the little back window.

"Missus—" he began.

The window flew up and the woman shouted: "Go on; git away from here! I heard about you yistiddy, you leper. Git along out o' here, or I'll—I'll—I'll call the constable." She was half-idiotic with terror, with that worst terror of all, the terror born of superstition and ignorance.

He turned away, curiously unmoved, and limped dully down the road toward a clump of houses. In his mind he revolved only the one thought: Sure, if he could only get something to eat, he would get out of the way. He didn't want to bother anybody. But his stomach was empty and paining him now with a ravenous, insistent gnawing. His mouth harbored a nasty taste, thick

and brown, and his heart burned. . . . If he could only get something to eat!

At the first clump of houses the news of his coming had preceded him by that invisible village magic which disseminates news, and already one of the nearest yards was filled with a timorous, cowering throng, huddled about, arguing, jostling, appealing and condemning among themselves. There was a nervous shuffling around a tall old gray-beard who, with a long frontiersman's rifle in his hands, was struggling to get loose from his frantic wife and daughter.

"He sha'n't set foot on this place, by heck!" he commanded, through his teeth. "I'll blow him to kingdom come if he does."

"Oh, don't, Hennery, don't!" sobbed his wife.

The perturbation of the crowd rose.

"I reckon it ain't charity!"

"Charity—fiddlesticks! This ain't no time fer charity."

"Le's put 'im in jail!"

"Oh, yes," sneered an answerer, "an' then we c'ud have the whole neighborhood ketch it."

One woman kept running up and down before the affrighted gathering, whimpering repeatedly: "What's he want to come here fur, anyway? Say, what's he want to go an' come here fur, anyway?"

"B-b-better jest drive 'im off, an' let 'im go somewheres else," ventured a big fat man with a quivering chin.

"Better let the old man shoot 'im," grumbled another. "That's the best way out of it."

"Brethren," interposed a voice of assumed authority, as a stern man stepped to the front, "this man is one o' God's creatures. We must do something for him and send him on his way. We must find out our dooty and do it like Christians."

At the preacher's words the babel ceased.

The cause of it all came up to the alley fence and looked wearily over at the commotion. He had long been used to such receptions. The preacher, taking the situation upon himself with the

warm thrill of the martyr, stepped forward, put his hands to his mouth, and yelled across the empty lot: "Hey, you! What do you want?"

The man at the fence blinked his eyes grimly, as if he scarce understood.

"What d'you want?" called the preacher again.

There were signs of effort in the thick throat of the stranger and, when the silence was tensest, a hoarse word came across the yard, falling with uncanny emphasis upon the hushed ears of the trembling villagers, as a flail smites an empty threshing floor:

"Grub!"

The preacher turned toward his flock. "He wants breakfast," he said, simply.

"How'll he git it?" quavered a man's voice, contrarily.

"Prepare it; I will take it toe him," said the man of God.

"Mister Dusenberry, you sha'n't do anyth—" began a whip-like, assertive, female voice after the pause of consternation which had followed upon the pastor's remark. But he held up his hand to stop the flow of words.

"It is my dooty," he remarked, gently.

The meal was cooked. Half the town gathered to await the event of transporting the food to the hungry man, the word having passed through the village.

The man sat on a rock in the alley, his head bowed into the stumps of his hands, stupidly, stolidly nursing his sullen hunger. He had no more feeling in the matter than if he had taken a spoonful of opium. All he realized was that they had not chased him away when he had told them what he wanted. There they stood, like school children looking at a gipsy. He grinned at the sight.

Indeed, the whole air on his side of the fence was that of apathy; on the side of the crowd was timorous, electric frenzy.

He sat with his head in his hands, impotent and dumb, looking downward at his shoes.

"You'd better not hand it to him yourself," cautioned the woman who

had cooked the meal, bringing it out in a newspaper. "I'll burn the noos-paper," she explained to the crowd, "after he's done with it." At this they nodded their emphatic approval.

"I'll—I'll push it toe him on a shovel," announced the churchman with firm lips, as he armed himself with that implement and started for the back gate . . . in gingerly fashion, sidling along, unconsciously adopting the manner in which one would approach a wild animal with a hunk of raw meat.

The man in the alley grinned feebly at the sight of the approaching shovelful of food. It was primitive laughter, the skinning of the teeth at the prospect of enjoying something to eat. As it neared him his eyes lit up, and again the saliva flowed unchecked through his lips down onto his chin, while his breath came with a painful, sucking sound. There was a meal of bacon and eggs and bread on the shovel. The nearer it approached the less control the man had over himself. At last he looked the advancing clergyman square in the eye, his face flaming as he did so and working grotesquely with savage pleasure at the smell of the food. By a sudden uncontrollable expulsion of breath he uttered a raucous, guttural grunt. The preacher stopped in terror. The man made a convulsive movement; and his nervous benefactor, no longer able to stand his ground, dropped the shovel at the gate and fled incontinently toward the house where his flock stood, cowering in awe.

The man leaped over the fence and fell grovelling upon the food, smearing it into his mouth with both hands. The whole crowd ran excitedly from the spot, and made for their own homes, babbling and gesticulating like crazy children.

A half-hour later the scene had resumed its accustomed repose. The weary traveler was disappearing over the northern hills and the preacher was burying the shovel in an ashheap. He held it by a newspaper carefully wrapped around the handle.

That day two more villages were overtaken, in the first of which the vagabond got a cold sandwich. In the

second he was stoned away by men and boys, because a farmer had driven over and given them warning.

This time he again ran for shelter and lay and slept in some underbrush, awaiting the fall of night. He awoke thirsty, his lips cracked and dry and the sores in his mouth itching and burning with a hot, ulcerous moisture that made the tears stream from his eyes and his breath come in gasps. It was miles before he came to a brook, however, and when he did reach a little spring, bubbling down from a mossy old barrel, he rolled his head in the full stream, drinking with great avid gulps. Then, as a precaution against further thirst, he took out a dirty handkerchief, soaked it, and laid it in a ball against his lips and teeth. Again he set out northward, walking mechanically.

Toward morning, when the last scant rim of night was slipping down out of the sky, he reached a railroad siding and crawled into a box car unobserved. As was his wont, he fell asleep easily, and while he slept the car was jerked out and started—luckily for him, toward the north, into Pennsylvania.

He wanted to get to New York. He had a brother there who could smuggle him into the steerage of an outgoing ship.

Once he awoke, felt the car moving, and dozed into slumber again: and so throughout the soft, languid golden day he was trundled northward in the moving train, stopping and backing, coupling and uncoupling, but always headed north. The next thing he knew he was shaken roughly by the shoulder. It was dusk and a brakeman stood over him.

"Here, you'll have to git out o' this," said the man with the lantern.

"Aw, lemme ride, boss," he pleaded.

"Nope; can't do it. The conductor's seen yuh." Then, as an afterthought: "Have yuh got any coin?"

The man laughed derisively for an answer, and ducked his head.

"Any whiskey?"

"Naw."

"Any smokin'?"

"Naw."

He was bundled out into the right-o'-way.

"Git!" the brakeman said. No money, no whiskey and no tobacco rendered him beyond the pale of any train crew's fraternity.

Hungry again, he struck out away from the railroad with a heavy heart. Life with him was simply a problem of getting something to eat as often as he could. For besides his natural hunger he had that diseased craving for food which drove him desperately and harshly by day and night as long as he was awake. He had often eaten meat raw and farm vegetables fresh from the earth, in order to satisfy it. Now, by successive stages he had been reduced as far in the scale of human living as he possibly could be; he represented no more in the world than some scurvy dog ranging the alleyways. His pain and privation harried him; at times his heart was seized with such a weakness that he could scarcely move. The world of men loathed, shunned and despised him. Thus it was he staggered along through time and distances, stolid, apathetic, brutal, broken.

He did not really know whether he wanted to get to New York and take ship or not; that was just a sort of an excuse with him to keep on living and trying to get somewhere. He clung tenaciously to life, like a beast that will suffer any accident rather than death. It was not that life held anything in store for him. If he had been capable of reasoning he would have seen that life really did not hold anything for him except this daily battle for food, and that even in this his fighting strength was decreasing with the weeks. But he did not stop to reason. He merely wiped his forehead and went on. . . .

He had left the railroad half a mile behind when he heard a cheery voice singing somewhere in his vicinity:

"Halleylooyah, I'm a bum—bum,
Halleylooyah, bum again!
Halleylooyah, give us a handout:
Revive us a-a-again!"

It was an old hobo song. He had heard it sung on the docks down South. So that now his eyes lighted with com-

radeship as he plodded to the top of a little hillock and looked down. There, seated at a fire and cooking something in a tin can, was a man under thirty years of age, clad in ragged clothes. As the man before the fire kicked the embers together he took up his refrain again:

"Oh, the spring time has *came*
And I'm just out o' *jail*;
Without any money, without any *baill*
Halleylooyah, I'm a bum—bum,
Halleylooyah, bum again—"

Another hobo. The wanderer came down to the fire, relief in his heart.

"Evenin'," he said, briefly.

The man at the fire straightened up and looked around. He was slender and fair-haired and sleepy-eyed, but with a devil-may-care manner and a companionable voice. He removed a cigarette calculatingly from his lips and said:

"Evenin'." Then he went on with his song:

"Halleylooyah, give us a handout,
Ree-vi-i-i—"

He broke off and queried abruptly, yet pleasantly, "Bummin' it, too, 'bo?"

"Uh-huh."

"Where yuh headed fur?"

"York."

The man started to sing again, thought better of it, stopped and remarked: "So'm I. What's yur name?"

"Simpson. What's yours?"

"Rock—Isaiah Rock. What's yer first name?"

"George," answered the other.

Rock relit his cigarette and turned to the can he had over the fire. From somewhere in his coat pocket he pulled out a small paper sack and, opening it, poured some coffee into the canful of hot water. Simpson watched him with greedy eyes and working lips, and when the pungent aroma of brewing coffee came to him he shivered with the physical reaction. His new-found companion turned and looked at him queerly and closely.

"George," he said with a slow drawl, "what are you, anyhow? A pug?"

"Naw," answered Simpson. "Why?"

"I was looking at them ears of yours. And those fists. They sure look like

you'd been boxing considerable and had broken your fingers."

Simpson shuffled furtively, and seemed nervous. "Naw, . . . aw, naw," he said, lamely.

Rock stepped over and took one of his hands curiously. "Why, damn my soul!" he exclaimed, as he peered closer in the flickering firelight. "Fingernails growing right out of your knuckle joints, ain't they? How's it come half your fingers are gone and yer nails are 'way down there?"

"I—I dunno," stuttered Simpson. Then he stood a moment, like an ox, stupid in thought. His mind worked slowly, like a great, cumbersome wheel. Should he tell now? Or wait? With a shake of resolution he at last spoke: "I might's well tell yuh now, I guess. If you're going to throw me off, too, yuh might's well do it now. On'y for Gawd's sake gimme some o' that coffee before I go." He leaned over doggedly. "That there"—he pointed at the stumps of fingers—"is leprosy—yes, leprosy! An'—an' I've got it."

He had blurted it out, coarsely, with an angry roar. Tears were in his eyes and his rough, membranous words came tumbling out more and more rapidly as he rushed into his story. "I'm a leper! Yeh!" He stopped. Then, haltingly: "It ain't my fault. I've been one fer fifteen years; got it in N' Orl'ns somehow, I never did know. But it ain't ketchin', honest it ain't. An' I ain't bothered nobody; not a damned soul. I started out three weeks ago to git to my brother in Noo York. What've I got all along the line? What's happened to me?" He threw up the stump of a hand in mute appeal.

Little Isaiah Rock, with cigarette glowing eagerly, broke in in his drawl: "Yeh. I know. I've heard it . . . seen it in the newspapers and heard other 'boes talking about you. I was thinking of yuh just the other night, an' feeling sorry for you. Only your name ain't Simpson."

"I know it ain't," the other hurried on. "I lied. I was scared yuh'd know, an' would throw me off like all the rest of 'em done. Them—them"—he waved

his hand at the dusky rim of earth and sky, and groped in his wrath for a suitable word—"them damn hounds has starved me, chased me, throwed rocks at me—aw, hell!" He wanted to voice his grievances and his hatred but he did not know how. "I don't know," he smoldered along, "I don't call that a square deal—I don't call that bein' on the level—I— Live an' let live, I says—damn 'em."

Rock broke in with a chipper laugh. "Coffee's ready, old hoss," he said, coming over and laying his hand on the outcast's shoulder. "Draw up your chair—if you can find one out here in the woods." He laughed at his own joke.

The leper stood amazed. "An'—an'—you—ain't—scared?"

Rock threw away the stub of his cigarette. "Hell, no!" he said, easily. "I seen lots o' that stuff—Straits Settlements . . . Borneo. Nix. I'm *for* you. Drink your coffee, 'bo, an' I'll tell you about it."

Over the fire the two sat and hobbled. Long before Rock had finished his yarn he had brought out a leg of cold chicken from somewhere and a hard boiled egg and had pressed them upon the famished listener; and these the leper ate in great bestial gulps as he heard Rock's story.

It was just the simple story of a careless, idle vagrant, a "bum" from birth. A man who either did not care enough about life—or cared too much about living—to take it seriously. A happy-go-lucky tramp, born to the rags and outskirts of the world. "I got my notions, 'bo. We're all just skin and bones. That's all. Just skin and bones. And as long's the bones ain't broke and you can stuff your skin, that's all there is to it," is the way he put it to Simpson, who listened happily. Simpson did not comprehend half of it, except that here he had not been kicked out, here he was not shunned, here he had a friend—a friend!

And, listening dreamily, he sat in sodden composure licking the stumps of his fingers. Occasionally he grunted to make a play of companionship.

"I've saw lots of your kind—and

damned sight worse. I'm for you," concluded Rock at the end of a long recital. "I'm not afraid of you. I'm glad we ran across each other. You're just the kind of an old boy I like to pick up with. You an' me'll bum it together, George. As I said, I'm headed for York, too."

He looked at his companion, who was already nodding asleep. Then he arose and fixed him more comfortably, inquisitively inspecting once again the nearly ossified fists as he crossed them and laid them in repose. "Poor old scut," he murmured. At once, with a quick movement, he pulled off his coat and spread it over the sick man. After that he crawled off into the shelter of a culvert, smoked cigarette after cigarette in meditation, and gently dozed away.

The next day the strangely paired tramps inaugurated a new method. Isaiah Rock was the purveyor of food and drink, while Simpson lurked out of sight so as not to spread consternation. He gave the leper a hand whenever the latter broke down completely, as sometimes happened. The outcast acknowledged that his heart was killing him. Rock taught him the trick of stealing rides on the freight cars that passed along, headed for the big city. Best of all, he taught him something of his own good-natured outlook on life.

Thus a week went by, a week which had been to Simpson, relieved of all cares, one of the happiest in his life. When they had not been traveling he had sat around steeped in his natural torpor, devoid of all sensation except that of physical security. They had made good progress on the journey and to him everything seemed favorable. He ate regularly and slept often. He had not noticed, however, that his companion was becoming more worried and exasperated, nervous and alarmed at light noises.

One night as the leper sat at the fire by the railroad track drowsing lightly, Rock came panting up on a run. He had been out getting something to eat. He threw down half a ham, brusquely, and, as soon as he could get his breath, exclaimed:

"By God, they gave me a close shave that time!"

Simpson rubbed the phlegm from his eyes and stared uncomprehendingly at the provender. "Yuh don't mean to say they give yuh all that ham," he said.

"Gave it to me?" gasped Rock. "Hell, no! I stole it."

The other looked at him in surprise. Rock gazed steadily back. Then he came around the fire and took his comrade by the shoulder:

"Listen to me, George," he said, looking Simpson square in the eye. "They're onto me—and you." The other made a slight movement. "Yep. They know I'm bumming with you. How the news gets from town to town—I don't know, but that's the size of it. They know I bum the grub and then come out here in the bushes and divvy it with you. And so help me God, so far as they're concerned—I—I might as well have the—the—you know—too! That's a fact! Why, two days ago I went into Tocosta an' started the rounds o' the back doors, when a Bill came up to me and says, 'Say, 'bo, you better clear out o' this place.' 'Why?' I asks. 'Well, I won't wait for no medical authorities to act,' he answers, shaking his finger in my face, 'and I know who you're travelin' with. Now git!'"

"Aw, now! Aw, damn 'em," rumbled Simpson, gruffly, not knowing what to say. He felt this whole new scheme of things giving way in him as the old fear stole back into his veins.

"Well," said Rock, complacently, "you know me, George. I got."

The leper shook his head morosely from side to side, muttering through his half-open steady lips. All he could think of to say as he ruminated was, "Aw—damn 'em! Aw, now. Wot the hell."

Rock lit a cigarette. "Listen. The next place we hit was eight miles from there. I thought we'd got away from that: but they nailed me again. Well, I put two an' two together without saying anything to you—oh, it wouldn't have done no good, anyhow—and I figured that this wise-up would travel faster'n

we could. So . . . since then I've been keeping out o' sight. I haven't been tryin' to beg the grub. No . . ." He paused a moment and filled his lungs with smoke. Then, interspersing the words with the "pt-pt" of the cigarette smoker trying to free his lips from grains of tobacco and paper, he spoke the three words: "I swipe it."

The leper sat still, the firelight lighting up his massive, lumpy features and distorting them even more than the disease had. The stumps of his hands he rubbed nervously together.

All at once his thoughts culminated. He grunted roughly like a man that is down and is being kicked. "Look a-here," he flared, grimly, "wot 'n 'ell's the matter with this world? Huh?" He blinked his eyes quickly. "Wot 'n 'ell's the matter?" He settled back slowly, dejection in his voice. "Live an' let live, I says."

"Well, we're up against it," cheerfully announced the little tramp. "That's how things stand."

Neither moved for the space of a few minutes. At last Simpson spoke.

"Yuh better watch out," he began, haltingly, almost ready to break down, "they'll do somepun to yuh—stealin', yuh know. They might shoot, er set dawgs on yuh, er arrest yuh." He pondered sluggishly for a moment, as if reluctantly making a big sacrifice. "Rock, yuh—yuh—fur yer own good, yuh better go on an' leave me." The effort had been an enormous one, yet he showed no sign of emotion on his face.

Rock laughed, his plucky good spirits coming to meet the crisis. "Not on your tintype, Georgie, old boy!" he exclaimed. "I'm goin' to stay with you until we make our little bow to the Battery. You can bet on that." His face sobered a minute as he used argument. "Besides, can't you see? I'm a marked guy already. Even if I did leave you, these chumps that don't know nothin' about the—about your kind o' trouble—would say I had it, too. Yes, they would; sure, they would! And then I'd have to play hide-'n'-go-seek with them the same as you did.

So," he concluded, blithe and triumphant, "we might as well buck the game together, old pard; and since you're sicker'n you were, it's a damn cinch we *ought* to buck it together!"

But Simpson shook his head and groaned and turned the matter over in his mind for over half that night. Isaiah Rock sat out on a railroad tie smoking cigarettes in nervous, rapid cogitation. In the morning, however, Rock had his way.

He had his way, but it was a poor triumph. Three nights after that they lay outside a small town, waiting until it was dark before Rock should go in. Then, after Rock had left, Simpson busied himself with the coffee, lit his pipe, and waited. An hour went by. The night was calm and a delicately keyed hush, the not quite silence of a country night, whispered over the hills.

He sat there thinking. "I tol' Rock he'd better g'wan and leave me—an' he had," he muttered to himself. Five minutes passed and he spoke again: "Aw, w'y 'n hell don't they quit, an' lemme alone? That's wot I'd do—I'd quit an' let a feller alone. I'd g'wan away an' quit an' let 'im alone."

All of a sudden he heard the faint report of a gunshot in the direction of the town. He sat bolt upright, his heart surging and bounding in his breast.

Could it be Rock?

A swift, true, indefinable conviction rushed over him and left him sweating and palsied. It was Rock!

He dragged himself in misery to the top of a little hillock, whence he could look over into the village; and there he waited again. The moon, large as a shield, moved into the sky. The night wind came lipping about his thick, puffed ears. He lay there dumb and trembling, not knowing what to do, what to think. And all the while he murmured indistinctly: "Aw, now; that ain't no way to do. Aw, now—damn 'em!"

There was a crash in the underbrush and a stumbling near him. He arose quickly. In another moment Rock had rolled . . . veered . . . swung about into the open, gasping wildly and holding his hands to his side. Then he plunged straight up the hill toward his waiting ally.

"They—they"—his voice hissed in his throat—"they g-got me—Simpson—damn 'em! Hah! They g-g-got m-me—at last!" He almost fell, but straightened up with a spasm and his eyes rolled toward the sky above. Then he slid to the ground in a lump.

Simpson stood for a moment without moving; only his mouth twitched spasmodically as if with pain. He stooped at length and, kneeling, gathered the warm body into his arms, almost tenderly. A full minute went by. Then he rose. He shook his clump of a hand at the moon and at the lights of the village.

"Aw . . . yuh *God* damned hounds," he wailed. "Wot the hell's the use o' all this?"



PATRIOTISM—The logical consequence of referring to a country as "she."



TACT—Hypocrisy in its Sunday clothes.

WITH THE CURRENT

By R. M. Hallet

THE man in the boat, stopping his paddle, looked up the leprous trunk of a gray gum overhanging, and presently shook his head.

"No," he said aloud, "you might make a dish to deceive the Queen of Spain, as my old pardner said. But I reckon you're an impeerative dish."

The "impeerative" dish, a gray lizard, moved a little, doubtingly, with a kind of sinuous languor, and a scraping of its scales against the dead wood. A dapper and thoughtful reptile, it plainly never found itself in advance of its occasions.

"Good-bye, gohanna," said the man in the boat good-humoredly. He shifted his mat of wheat bags, and shot out again into the current. Trailing his huge paddle, he rolled himself a cigarette, looking keenly ahead through the heat which brimmed out of this deep sun-baked fissure, at the bottom of which a thread of river ran. He knew it all: the mud, the heat, the blue sky, the gray banks, the sly crackings, the slow, tepid current, over a sparkle of sands, over polished pebbles, over green quivering films wavering from the sunk boles of fallen trees. The river, in four weeks, had spoken its heart to him a thousand times, menacing him, for his indifference, with snags, shallows; wooing him in dark pools with possibilities of river cod, luring him, teasing him with dallying bends, teaching him anew the folly of toil, of stress, which was the one folly of his life.

But though he knew it, he had not wearied of it. The heat and silence and emptiness were comforting to him, like a warm blanket on a cold night. Yes, he had known cold nights; he, with his

fish's blood. Drifting along here lazily, between steep banks of cracked mud, which revealed the onslaughts of wet seasons past, he thought of those bitter watches in the Southern Ocean; the black deck, like the roof of a barn, of that old barque which he had deserted in Sydney to be his own man again at any cost; the glazed yards, the wind swelling over the break of the poop, droning in the taut rigging. That was his one weakness—cold. It was his policy, when he steered his own course, to traffic in the torrid zone. Not that he always steered his own course. He had been caught up, now and then, certainly. On occasion he had gone end over end, like a leaf of autumn. All his life, indeed, at intervals, he had known the servitude of the seas, but as a means, not an end. Only incidentally was he an able seaman. Almost alone among his kind he had a faculty of "sticking ashore" when he chose.

And now he chose. Dragging his paddle through the sluggish current, he thought of the cool sea with pleasure, as of a mistress for whom his infatuation was not fatal. He bore no chains. He stood alone, momentous, colossally selfish, without aims, without responsibilities. No one, man or woman, had ever thwarted him of the new horizons which he sought; these horizons which his feet might never pass, his eye never penetrate. By the blue distance alone could he be subjugated; into whose depths he projected his visions, and lost them, conquering at a stroke time, space and this human kind, through which his burly figure passed, ever passed. He was of those who are free by being footloose; and free in vain.

Thus he dreamed and drifted, self-sufficing; a lolling giant with a scarred body and a child's heart, the jaw of a lion, the eye of a gazelle. He had full capacity for wonder. He floated there in a bath of clarifying indolence, without a shadow of the spirit of urgency upon him, following the current, whose gentle movement could alone appease him, satisfying that strange hunger of the heart which drives your wanderer, it may be half against his will, to sudden ends. He stretches out mighty arms to receive all, and receives nothing; and yet, in wondering, recovers somewhat, too.

In remote time—three months, half a year—he might find himself at the port of Adelaide, the sea quivering before him in the heat there, with the rusty liners which he knew so well stolid against the docks. But now, drawing some secret solace from this deep entombment of his being in solitude, he was content to let that lie in prospect, against the hour of his need.

So he drifted, and presently, yawning, he said, "Holy Mackinaw!" profoundly and without occasion. Then he pushed back the felt hat, with broad brim, which sat close on his black hair, and smiled, a slow companionable smile, like a taunt to the solitudes around him. Talking to himself, eh? He had done that before, and he knew what a weight of isolation it required. There had been a fellow from the back country at a bar in Sydney who had answered his own questions instead of other people's. He pondered the fact.

Suddenly, forging into a green, quiet pool, he snapped a spoonhook out behind him, for it was in these pools that river cod might lurk, and it was certainly true that he must provision before night. With effortless strokes he drove across this pool, turning back to watch his spoon twinkling over the sands of a bar, which wavered up in yellow brilliance through the warm green depths. They held the sparkle of true gold, these sands, not figurative; this gold which lies thinly dusted over all that land, kindling adventure in the heart with its faint promise, everywhere repeated.

Passing the pool without a strike, he

drew out the hook, and holding it by the line, twirled it in the yellow sunshine, whose rays fell upon him like hot bars, massive and tangible.

A cockatoo, half immersed, bumped the boat. It had eaten rabbit poison and was dying; in its eyes, over which a film was rising, a look of black immediacy. The man, nipping it by the claws, watched curiously the withdrawal of life from that warm body.

"It's the Grim Destroyer, birdie," he muttered. It was his habit to refer to death in these terms, as to a shabby person, always at his elbow, to whom he played the patron, but who, he knew, would some day take "a fresh twist" out of him, playing him some low trick or other in return.

With a clatter in the throat, and a last ruffle of the wings, the cockatoo fell sidewise, knocking its beak against the boat. The man pondered again, with corrugated brow and drooping cigarette; and presently, plucking the sulphur-colored crest from the head of the dead bird, he arranged the wet feathers artfully around the three barbs of his hook. As ever, the opportunist.

"Tempted to bite at it myself," he said joyously. He dropped the dead cockatoo overboard, and dipping his antediluvian paddle, struck out again into the current. A whole flight of cockatoos, chalk-white, with brilliant yellow crests erected, lit on an aged gum tree, and seemed to set its dead limbs into a clatter with their perverse screeching—this desolate sound, as of a diamond on glass, which made emptiness more empty. They glared down upon him, frowning and ruffling, as if in a spirit of personal anger at his appropriation of those feathers. Again he smiled, that slow smile from the depths of a contented spirit; the smile of a man without reverses, for whom things visible have no terrors; the smile of a man who has the world all to himself.

At the next bend the sun fell more nearly in his face, and his eyes narrowed. A broad beach of dimpling sands shone on his left; and on his right a solitary black hog was reaming his way deeper into a trembling mire. The

long snout worked softly at its end, gleaming; and the bristles on its arc of spine, razor-edged, shivered under this rising ecstasy of mud. The hog, lethargically sinking, expressed the depth and completeness of its experience in a grunt, a wrapt sound, luxurious and gross.

"Damn you," said the man; "wish I could get the hang of that."

He made the sound himself, and waited for the hog to correct him. But the hog, sulking in its bed of mud, with poisonous green bubbles rising on its flanks, appeared now content with its efforts, and closed its eyes. The man laughed, and again dipped his paddle.

Ahead of him a teal flapped its wings, dragging half out of water, luring him with its disabled look; but he knew all about that now. The teal was drawing his attention from its young—an exhibition of superfluous cunning, for he couldn't have found them in any case. He knew all about it. He knew all about everything now. Deeply satisfied with his knowledge of the subtler aspects of things, he laid the paddle on his knee and rolled another cigarette. Lighting it, he saw that his supply of matches was running low; and since that, too, afforded an outlet for his surprising acquaintance with shifts, he took the remaining matches, and dipping them in water, to soften the tips, he split each one carefully into fours, and laid these needle-like splinters out to dry. It had been a week since he had passed a house, and on that river a man without fire was a man without hope.

He took another turn now, shutting out the problem in contentment afforded by the hog; and as he swept his new horizon with the old eagerness, conscious of a vague seduction in each turning, though the changes were incredibly minute, an expression of genuine surprise tempered the mellow serenity of that dark face, which seemed to hold the sunshine.

"Holy Mackinaw!" he said again, but this time with a heavier and more justified inflection. For there was a man sitting on the bank.

II

THIS man was old and lean and puckered; but his monkey's face, a web of wrinkles, showed his eyes bold and roving, with the same quality in them of quick and searching appraisal which marked the eyes of the man in the boat. He was sitting on a soiled cotton bundle in two parts, joined by a strap; a black can, full of dents and wooden plugs and clay-colored water, was coming to a boil over a fire whose blaze this swagman quickened sparingly with small twigs.

"New chum?" he inquired, with a kind of casualness, as if conversation were a thing of naught. Indeed, since he kept to the road, like a proper swagman, his opportunities to talk came oftener than those of the man in the boat.

"Yes," said the latter. Aware that he was heard, he found his voice a trifle thick, as if clogged or rusted from disuse.

The man on the bank, lifting his can from the blaze, dashed a pinch of tea into it and set it back a moment. Withdrawing it again, he looked thoughtfully at his red lumpish boots, ironclads, these, with the impregnable leather in billows, and the loop of hot nails on the soles shining in the sun. He seemed to argue with himself whether it were worth while to go on.

"Yorky or Lanky?" he said presently, turning his tea into a dirty cup.

"Yank," said the man in the boat.

Then they were both silent, while the man on the shore looked at his boots again, as if these dumb oracles had left him doubtful. The silence, whose spell they had broken, closed in again, like a fog, encroaching on thought, burying the faculty and desire of speech deeper and deeper.

The tea stopped boiling in the battered can; the glowing twigs went gray, quivering into impalpability. One of them spurted blue flame, with the sound of a remote siren; and the swagman continued looking at his impenetrable boots. The Yank regarded him with contained amusement, his big forearms flattened against his knees.

"There you 'ave it, then," said the swagman suddenly, with a mighty effort bringing the circles of their experience into tangential relation again. "Needn't 'ave arst."

"Knew all the time?" inquired the Yank gently.

The swagman nodded.

"You go 'ookin' it off on this bloody river, luk this 'ere—in a boat."

He regarded the boat with disdain, and for so long a time that communication was endangered again.

"Easier than the road, and plenty of water. And whole feet," said the Yank, advancing his speckled toes proudly over the side of the boat. The swagman pushed his dirty helmet back.

"I've 'oofed it back an' forth 'ere fifteen years," he said; "an' I'll 'oof it fifteen more afore I tykes to boats. You won't get 'arf a mile beyond 'ere, any road."

"That's what they said a hundred miles back," replied the Yank, his brown eyes sparkling.

"An' wot do you know about stytions?" said the swagman. "'Ow's people goin' to know about yer, if all yer does is to suck yer bloody pipe, luk tha' there, sittin' in a boat? W're's yer tucker comin' from, howsever, muckin' along down there?"

"Now you're talking, pardner," said the Yank. "I wouldn't mention it to a living soul but you; but the fact is, I'm out of tucker."

"My precious life's blood!" said the swagman, with a more sympathetic interest. His eye fell on the burlap bag bulging with his own tucker, and he went on half apprehensively.

"'Ere. You go on 'arf a 'undred bends an' you come to Sir Robert Lansing's. 'Im as owns 'arf the pubs between 'ere an' Sydney. 'E's good for a lot, 'e is. Bread, man, an' a flamin' great lump of meat. Sir Robert hisself is a bit of a spoofer; but 'is ward, now—the young lydy—an elegant bit o' goods, that. You arst arfter 'er. . . . Skin like a byby."

He ground his heavy boot into the circle of dead fire, and getting up, swung his swag into place over a withered shoulder.

"She won't tyke pay, an' she won't arst yer t'work," he said, moving off. "She's a good plucked 'un, my crimson oath!"

"Try the boat a way," suggested the Yank amiably.

The swagman looked back from under his immense mysterious load, doubled into its covering of dirty cotton.

"The road'll do, me champion," he said. "I 'ad a job in Ballarat at two pun ten once, afore I knew the road. Work, man; often and often till the gray of the mornin'. But I ain't leavin' a good job for no boats. It's the road I 'ungers for."

He moved off, at his painful hobble, bowed under that load; thinking perhaps of the miseries of Ballarat in the days of two pun ten. For now behold him. He lived as he chose. If he did his five miles a day he was content, vaguely conscious of having outwitted something that had dogged him. And all unnoticeably subsistence crept into his bag, and he was happy.

"The road, eh?" thought the man in the boat, moving off again on the languid current. "Stiffen up, Mede," he said, addressing his boat, curiously named *Medea*. He must be getting on himself. And while the river led before him like a challenge, he conceded something to the road, this sturdy preference of the little swagman. A grim, cracked, parching road it might be, truly, yet it would call, twitching at him with a crook in the middle distance, and finally compelling him with a seductive dip against the far horizon. And he might know that he would be never a bit the better for it; that its taverns would deny him, its dusts poison him, its lone infinities oppress him; yet would he move out again upon it, his swag enormous on his shoulder, and the something urgent in his heart appeased.

Feeling the silence and the heat thick upon him, the Yank fell to his dreams again.

"Young lady on ahead, eh?" he reflected. The idea had little to commend itself to him. There had been young ladies a-plenty in Sydney, yet he had not tarried there. His few experi-

ments had convinced him that here lay the sole source of danger to his freedom. He went among them like a cat among crockery.

Now and then, taking his paddle out, he listened profoundly, resolving this confusion of minute sounds into the elements he knew, and straining for the new notes which should defy his experience. He heard behind him a melancholy crow, like a lost soul lamenting in those wastes; and then a prolonged "B-a-a-a" from some distant sheep, with its suggestion of shivering helplessness, like an abandoned child. Then he saw the solemn black ears of a rabbit, stock still, crouched behind a log. Taking out his paddle cautiously, he drifted down upon the log, hanging over his experiment with bated breath, his eyes beaming with a sudden hope that the little animal would not perceive him.

"Thinks he's out of sight," he said delightedly; and having come as near as he could, he yelled, with appalling power. The little rabbit jumped immoderately, and flinging up its hind legs and twinkling tuft of cotton tail, dived into its hutch.

"Not enough fur to him to make a humming bird a pair of leggings," said the Yank affectionately, with a last sympathizing twinkle.

For the third time since his recent interview the river turned. He drew the boat to the bank, and driving his paddle deep into the mud, threw a hitch of his painter around the handle. Then he put on his boots, and laying his landing board across the mire, struggled up the bank, gouging his heels deep into the yielding clay. Gaining the top, he shaded his eyes with one hand and stood motionless. Yellow reaches of empty land confronted him; dead gums, dead grass, dead sheep, dead silence. Burnt, level, desolate, the land stretched from the river to the mountains; and through the haze the mountains smoldered, greenish purple, as if eaten to the heart by these prevailing fires.

At first he saw no human touch in all that desolation; but then his eyes, sweeping the vast prospect again with

their passionate desire for physical detail, sighted a red blot on the yellow ground, perhaps a mile away. He began to move toward it. He must take every chance now. As he strode along, a sort of oppression rose about him, weighting his steps, choking him. He stumbled, for he was already a little faint from hunger, and the day was reeling hot. He was in the bush now, and no mistake; as deep in as mortal man could get. Suddenly it seemed to him as if he were too far into that nameless and characterless solitude ever to get out. It circled him like a yellow indestructible plaque, struck with bones, as of sacrifices—a disk of some substance reposing over an abyss of intolerable heat. Then he smiled, largely. These were the chances he courted; they stilled in his breast the questions he could not answer. They were things to be dealt with.

He passed the red hide of a calf, withered over the end of a dead log, and a little beyond the skeleton of a sheep, its dazzling, frightfully white ribs curved regularly, distinct against a grayish ground of rabbit droppings. Everything dead—it was like the end of the world; like the surface of a dead planet.

The red shack was further off than he had thought; and when he came to it he was out of temper, because of the turfy unevenness of the ground and a suspicion, which had been growing on him, that the shack was tenantless. It was as miserable a place as shiftless selector ever turned his hand to. It was blind-ended, without windows; its roof of corrugated iron shone blistering silver in the fierce sun; and the door was not hinged, but laid against the side of it. The tank was empty, and burning to the touch. There was nothing inside but a collection of musty rubbish and an unmade bed. He stood staring at that disgusting litter, with its heavy meaning; and then his jaws settled together and a savage light grew in his eyes. The perverseness of things was working him up into his fighting temper.

Then he heard a slight cough, which came through the wall of the house with surprising distinctness. This proof of

somebody within a few feet of him, coming just as he had resigned himself to being quite alone, unsettled him. In some queer way, he felt it a sinister thing, this cough and nothing more. No movement, no inquiry, apparently, though the fellow must have heard him bungling about in there. Standing in the center of the room, on beaten earth, he fingered the handle of his sheath knife, expecting a shadow to fall across the yellow foreground framed in the warped doorway. And then a narrow shadow did fall there, and hesitate, and lengthen; and presently a dusty guinea hen came into sight, obviously picking about.

This absurdity roused him out of his waiting trance; and he stepped through the doorway and turned the corner of the hut. There was a man there, sitting on a broken bucket and staring off into the blurred distance.

III

"Got any mutton?" said the big Yank, moistening his lips.

He saw then that this was a very singular man before him. He was broad and heavily built; his thick legs were encased in leggings of black leather; and his clothes were wrinkled, as if he had slept in them, without knowing how—and on the bare ground, too, by the twigs and dirt across the shoulders. His broad, low forehead was white under the vizor of his cap, but his cheeks and his pointed chin were burned a terrible pink. He looked flabby and ill exercised.

"Any mutton?" said the Yank again.

"No," he answered. He continued to gaze at the distant gums with unmeaning earnestness. His chin rested on the handle of an axe, and the axe head was brilliant with rust, clear to its blunted edge.

It seemed to the big Yank as if the land were billowing away from him. At the edge of the cleared space, he saw a phalanx of ringed gums, with twisted branches, bleached bone in color, flung against the sky like scourges. There was no sound except a sort of mutter-

ing, very minute, as if the earth were ready to burst open. The dead gums wavered about in the blue of that filmy distance.

"This isn't your place, I reckon?" said the Yank.

The man shook his head. His pale eyes were fixed on those gums with a ravenous questioning.

"Owner's underground likely," said the Yank. "Smacks of the Grim Destroyer, eh? Well, one of these pleasant little rambles is enough for a morning—I'm going back to the boat."

The man lifted his chin from the handle of the axe.

"You've got a boat?" he said, with his first sign of interest. His voice came harshly, at a queer pitch, with the same difficulty, as of something long disused, and coming into play again, which the Yank had noted in his own voice.

"Yes," said the Yank. "Come along? There's some shade there, and a Sydney *Bulletin* a few months old."

"Yes," said the man. "I'm looking for a place. I was here a few years ago, and I came by the river. I think I'd remember, there."

"Ah!" said the Yank. "Looking for Sir Robert, like the rest of us?"

A light of pure fear leapt in those unsightly eyes.

"What do you want of him?" he said.

"Tucker," said the Yank. "Flour and mutton. Let's get out of this."

They went stumbling toward the river through deserted paddocks, which smoldered ahead of them like blankets thrown over a fire to stifle it. This man was weak at the knees and staggered over the least obstruction. The Yank, putting out his hand once to support him, felt the big forearm horribly soft to his fingers. The fellow's breath came in grunts, too, and his seared cheeks wobbled. Obedient and helpless, he hastened toward the river, the bronzed Yank urging him along. Yet behind that lax face something lurked, something not at all wobbling—indomitable rather—as if some terrible resolve were to be forced upon a weak man by sorry circumstance, by his fate. What else

could have driven this fat, incompetent body so deep into the wilderness?

Coming to the end of those scorching paddocks, with their withered grass and their scattering of hides and white bones, the big Yank lowered his companion down the shaking bank, and settled him in the boat, under the burlap hanging of the cabin.

"I've certainly got to provision before long," he murmured, taking the paddle again. The man in his bunk, leaning back, blinked at the surface of the yellow river, with its imperceptible current, its steep banks and its eternal gray coping of mud, full of sprawling cracks, like webs, starting from innumerable centers.

"He's sure got something on his mind," thought the Yank, watching this man, who would not lay back comfortably, but sat staring at these banks, where landmarks seemed one and all to have toppled down, easing themselves in mud, as if consciously taking the tone of things there.

"This sort of thing won't do for you," said the Yank. "Not the life for you at all. Here you are without any swag—no liquor—money's no good, half the time. You're forty miles from ink or whiskey."

Something in the pose of that man baffled him—the head, hung forward, watching the banks, and the thick shoulders rounded, as if by the tension of some effort. Like everything that lay in that relentless sunshine, thoughts, purposes, the wildest desires smoldered, scarcely enduring, not feeling the passage of time more than this far-flung, inanimate yellow field, inwoven with bones and whole curious patterns of dead animals—like a burial ground of living hopes.

"Not that you need ink, but you might whiskey," said the Yank. His affability fell, stroke by stroke, on deaf ears. The man was consumed by memories, attempted memories.

"It's a black wattle," he said presently. "If you see a black wattle—"

His eye fell on a long knife with a worn blade which stood up in the bottom of the boat, intolerable to the eye—a fierce gleam.

"Not many wattles by the river," said the Yank. "River oaks and gums mostly."

"But there's this one," said the man. "There's this one. I came here once before and saw it."

For the first time he fixed his pale eye definitely on the other; and the tall Yank, looking squarely at him in turn, thought to himself:

"That's it, then. I've seen you before."

This did not surprise him. In the twenty years of his roving, he had seen and retained so many faces that he seemed to know everybody now, intimately; as if they were all crowded into one small shop. As with most people it seems well-nigh incredible that a known face should ever have been strange, so with him, since all were known, by so many being known, none ever had been strange.

"But where?"

This query nagged him, as a lost word might on the tip of the tongue. He plied his paddle, and called to mind a multiplicity of scenes, full of faces. And what faces! Fierce, mild, innocent, designing. He rejected them all. These were queer fish rising from the soundless depths of his experience. But he couldn't recall where he had seen him.

"I'd like to buy that knife," said the man, who had not taken his eyes from it all this while.

"Two shillings," said the Yank promptly.

The man paid, counting sixpences out of a worn, black wallet. Then he jerked the knife out of the bottom of the boat and held it in one pink, freckled hand, testing the edge.

"That's a good beginning," said the Yank. "But you need more than that. You need swag, man—or there's likely to be a strange face in hell for breakfast one of these cold mornings."

"This is all I need," said the man. He leaned over it, and his noisy breathing ceased. He balanced it, held it several ways, and finally, laying it down, scanned the banks again, with their desperate sameness, their fringe of gums slanting out over the river; their in-

numerable roots—now hanging straight down, where a freshet had carried away the soil, now writhing into a grisly tangle, with dark openings—like a nest of snakes, and again huge and tenacious, like the tense knuckles of giant hands, thrust deeply in against the insidious encroachments of the river.

They went on in silence, opposing each other, the crude boat creaking along, unhurried, at the will of the dull current, where the thin leaves of the gums twirled idly and the sun fell with the same withering insistence. It was the sort of place where it might seem as if nothing, by any possibility, could happen; as if life ran too thin for comment, and the inanimate held sway for sheer lack of human material to give it habitable touches. And yet, under the heavy stillness and quiescence of the bush, there grew in the consciousness of the big Yank, as his paddle sank into those yellow depths, endlessly, a sense of something toward; of a resolve, secret, like the solitude, burning always behind the stolid face of this silent passenger, with the dead fixity of his look like a veil between them. But in the bush men ask no pointed questions; they meet, and part, without divulging ends.

And, finally, holding his paddle poised in midair, the man in the sun said colorlessly:

"There's your black wattle."

The man in shadow shifted his gross bulk, with a movement of the lips and quickened breathing.

"Ay, that's it," he said.

In silence they drew abreast of it.

"We don't want to land here," said the Yank. "We'll go on to the cook's shed. That must be on the river somewhere."

"I'll land here," said the man. "You'll find the cook's shed around that turn, I think."

"As you say," returned the Yank, not sorry to part company with him. His fat, lax person hung on a man heavier than the silences.

The black wattle was all in yellow bloom, and cast a deep fragrance. The bank beside it had been trampled down

into a roadway, ending at the river's edge in a rough pier. The Yank swung into this; and his passenger, after a brief moment of indecision, got up stiffly, and sliding the long blade of the knife into his belt, stepped ashore.

"I'm not coming back," he said then; and the sound of these words, falling on his own ears, seemed to frighten him. He staggered up the bank a little way, and stopped and looked back and went on again, braced as if for an effort beyond his powers.

"Have a drink first," said the Yank impartially, gazing at him with level eyes. The man shook his head, swallowed and began to walk steadily up the roadway. The Yank, without much curiosity, without waiting even to see the end of him, dipped his paddle and moved off on the sluggish current.

IV

"Cook's shed ought to turn up soon," he thought. "I'll give him notice of that fellow. Queer customer to be hanging around here."

He sent the boat along with vigorous, even strokes. Straining against the paddle, he dropped out of his mind the unpleasant image of his recent passenger. But the sight of that roadway, leading in to its sheep station, filled the dry crevice ahead of him with promise. Without a doubt, the cook's shed would be somewhere on the river bank.

The next bend was an oxbow, and he doubled back, at the mercy of this capricious river. Presently he came upon a line of wheat bags, stiff with mud, drying on a wire netting. He sorted them over, and picking out the cleanest, dropped them calmly into the boat. A fish pole, stuck deep in the mud, with the line out, attracted him. In a stroke he was upon it; but the hook was bare even of bait. Rummaging in the bottom of the boat, he found a clam, opened it, and tossed back the hook baited. Then, with his old kindly smile, he rolled a cigarette, and drew on it deeply. These inconsequences, these chance meetings, these idle and amiable

moments, were all that would make up his progress to the sea. They were enough.

Then he spied the cook's shed under a gum tree, a lean-to of stringy bark, whitewashed, looking rather like a discarded marshmallow. He was some way above it still, but his eye, measuring the bank, decided for him that here was obviously where he must ascend, and he tied the boat to a root, and slid his feet into the heavy boots again. Picking up his blackened billy-can, and his burlap nosebag, he got out, raised both arms, yawning, and went up the bank. Pest! A hot day.

His eye met these unsteady yellow undulations with disfavor. After all, the river was the better place. There was a kind of madness about these still sheep; these dusty, baggy, unbelievable sheep, posed on wooden legs, and staring at him mistrustfully.

"The bush needs a fairy," he said then, and thought at once of the young lady with skin "like a byby," who wouldn't ask him to work, whatever she did. How about her? . . . Looking round at these charred stumps, at the yellow ground rising in front of him like a blister which the sun had raised on some tawny hide, he failed to bring her among the number of his visions. In that somnolent sunshine, with mud and bones and dead timber all about, it wasn't possible. . . . And, after all, what was a swagman's dream? She would have her shoes unbuttoned at the top, like all those others. She would have lost heart and hope, even if she were there, by some miracle, lurking behind the gums, which mocked the thought, drawn up in stolid ranks. Suns would have withered her; the sorrows of the bush, pressing in relentlessly, would have disfigured her. They crumpled in this heat like a stray paper in a gust of flame.

With a sigh for the passing of romance, which could still cast the blight of its emptiness upon his heart, with its sublime conviction of that emptiness, he broke in upon the reveries of the dolorous cook, who sat on a bench, hungrily inclining his ear to the cracked

melody, with a recurrent hiccup in it, which came trembling out of the shining red maelstrom of a blistered horn—a sound smothered and sibilant, the engulfing of mermaids. The cook sat there, engrossed, perspiring, a small fellow with large ears, a large mustache, shaken in his whole person, like a reed, before this tinny blast, lost in vain imaginings; for this was that land of melancholy, where men came to forget and stayed to remember.

"Well, mate?" said the Yank.

"It ain't sundown yet," said the cook satirically, observing the burlap bag. With a movement of his little finger, he stopped the spinning number.

"Correct," said the Yank. "I'm not a sundowner yet. I'll pay for what you give me."

"And that won't be much, then," said the cook. But seeing in the smile of the big Yank nothing but what was companionable, and daunted a little, perhaps, by his proportions, he hastened to add amiably: "What there is you're welcome to, I'm sure of that. No charge for tucker 'ere. If you was to wait, Miss Aury will be coming over with the tomatoes an' maybe a squash or two."

"Ah!" said the Yank. "Miss Aury!"

"Yes," said the cook. "And a clipper-built girl, too, I'm bloody well sure of that."

The cook, picking up the bag, went into his shed. The Yank, gazing off across the uneven acreage, with its cropped, barren look, saw the low roofs of the estate glittering in sunlight.

"Miss Aury, eh?" he muttered.

A dog barked distantly; and then a little dog, with a flank as bare as the ground, waddled out of the shed, howled once or twice discreetly in answer, and composed himself again to slumber. The cook, coming out with the bag, looked at the animal with wrath and pity.

"Flash mugs," he said forlornly. "Never knew any good to come of shearing time."

"Sheared the dog for you, did they?" said the Yank gently, full of sympathy, taking his bag.

"Right down to 'is bleedin' lit'le 'ide," said the cook. "Their idea of 'umor. Easier for 'im to get at the hinsects, they said. My oath! I'd 'a' been in Sydney a week gone, if the dawg was right. An' 'ere I am tied up, losin' three quid a week by 'im."

He sat down limply.

"Goin' to wait for them tomatoes?" he asked.

"Why, yes," said the Yank. "Reckon I'll wait for Miss Aury. Got news of her up the line, I guess, from a swaggie."

"Ay," said the cook. "You would then. She feeds them swaggies proper. She'd give 'em the larst thing she 'ad in the 'aouse. They don't bother me now none. Right up to the 'aouse with 'em. 'Please, mum, I got caught short of Ballarat without no salt. A thousand pardings, but could yer spare an honest man goin' to 'is job a pinch of salt?' 'An' 'ow are yer for bread an' mutton?' says she. 'Maybe I can shift along,' says they. An' she says, 'You poor things,' an' empties the 'aouse into their nosebags. It's the likes of 'er as keeps swaggies on th' 'ump, I s'y. But she will 'ave it so, and wot's a bloody cook to s'y?"

Helpless before the problem of the cook, the Yank smiled.

"She in 'er fine feathers, too," said the cook. "She will dress like a lydy, no matter 'ow. 'Igh 'eels, an' a trail to 'er o'nights. An' she's a vixen with Sir Robert, to make up for the kind 'eart she 'as for the swaggies. Not as I blyme 'er there. 'E's an 'arf-faced one, Sir Robert is. There 'e sits an' sits in 'is bloomin' study, with 'is 'ands pluckin' 'is books, and 'is eyes goin' all over. A bit powdery, Sir Robert, I'm takin' it. Not as 'e's out of 'is 'ead, but 'e 'as the 'orrors, like."

The cook shifted his quid, and spat over the body of the shorn dog.

"'E was a bad 'un, they s'y, in the town. They s'y so. I'm a new chum. I can't s'y for meself, but they s'y 'e 'ad a row with the father of that girl, over th' mother, y'know; an' the father went to jile over it. I'm venturin' it 'ad better 'ave been Sir Robert, and me drawin' two quid a week from 'eem, too.

'E 'as 'is thoughts, if you arst me. Larst night, w'en I stepped onto the veranda, with the supper, 'e 'eard me, an' he went out of 'is 'ead proper.

"'Wot's that?' 'e says, jumpin' up an' clappin' 'is 'and to 'is 'ead. 'My God, wot's that?"

"'Supper, sir,' says I, that shaken I nearly dropped it, to look at 'is eyes.

"'Bring it round by the back after this, me man,' says 'e. 'Is fyce was the color o' that dawg. An' while I was settin' the table, 'e says, 'Robson,' 'e says, 'wot's the day of the month?"

"'Ang me if I know, sir,' I says.

"'You'll 'ang, no fear,' says 'e. My crimson word, if the dawg 'ad been right, I'd a snatched 'im there, bald-'eaded! 'If it comes to 'anging,' I'd 'a' said, 'there's morn'n me 'as their fears of tha' there.' So I would. But you can see for yerself, the dawg ain't fit to travel. Wot I s'y is, wot's 'e want of the day of the month? Wot's any decent man out 'ere want with the day of the month?"

"Or the month itself, or the year?" said the Yank compliantly. "What's the good of time?"

Again from over the rise they heard the distant howl of a dog, a prolonged ululation, dying and renewing itself, as if smothered under the thick day. The fat little dog who had been sheared got to his legs again, quivering, and howled back, with the same lack of self-confidence he had displayed before.

"Nasty yodel Sir Robert's hound has got," said the Yank. "Guess I won't wait for the young lady after all. Got to be getting on. By the way, I dropped a man over there on the other side. Queer genius. Better scour him up before dark. He might get into the sheep."

"Not 'e," said the cook. "'E knows better. Bloody bad business, cutting up sheep out here."

"Keep a weather eye out, though," said the Yank. "He's 'no swaggie. Well, much obliged."

He raised the bag, full of unknown obligations.

"It's nothing to me," grinned the cook, quite truly. He was amiable,

nothing more. "She'd ought to 'ave come before this."

"I can dream about her," said the Yank, grinning in turn. He strode off in the direction of his boat. He wasn't really in a hurry. It was only that surcease of motion faintly plagued him. Picking his way over fallen gums, he heard the strident note of the phonograph beginning again; and he stopped to listen, smiling. Then he flung a piece of bone, one of those white, jagged, porous bones with which all the bush is paved, at a vanishing rabbit; and in a moment or two he was standing on the bank above his boat. But as he was going down, he saw, with that schooled eye of his, the deep mark of a small heel in the clay.

He stopped, and raising his eyes a little, followed the trail of this new foot quite up to the side of his boat. Musingly deliberate, he went on down the bank, with his head bent, and moved by some whim, like a foreshadowing, he trod out these small depressions, one by one, with his own heavy heel.

Arrived at his landing plank, he saw that the burlap curtains of his bunk had been dropped all round, which gave him further pause. He stood there like something done in bronze, with the pleasurable sense of a thing utterly unforeseen and quite incredible. The silence grew and grew, enforcing itself upon him like a substance in that moment of complete inaction; and suddenly, quavering through it, came the unpleasant howling of Sir Robert's dog, very faint now.

Then he stepped quietly into the boat, sinking that end deeply, and rattling the pans for'ard. He drew in the muddy plank, and after thinking again, rolled down his trousers over his ankles. Then he lifted his paddle, but held it poised in midair, transfixed. His eye was caught by a draggled yellow tassel peeping out from under the coarse fringe of his burlap curtain.

Silently, as if in the presence of some amazing hallucination, which a noise would shatter, he dipped the paddle and the *Medea* shot into mid-stream. Then, while she drifted, he sat, absorbed,

twirling his black mustache, given over altogether to minute consideration of this tassel. And by degrees he became conscious of a slight fragrance, and of added weight in the boat; living weight, boasting a yellow tassel.

V

"CÆSAR's old jumped-up ghost!" he said aloud meditatively. He settled himself back and looked at his cabin as if it were a new thing altogether, something perpetrated upon him in his absence. The burlap curtains clung to the stanchions unbetrayingly; and the sun fell on the tin roof in a continuous discharge of these rays, smoldering gold, which caused it to snap and buckle from time to time. A smell of blistered varnish came from it.

"Fool notion," he muttered, mulling the thing over in his mind. It was unlikely—rather. Here he was in a country where a man had advance information of all the women within a radius of fifty miles—and then these blessed heel-marks—and that tassel. No. He blinked his eyes again, as if he felt something irritating them and again leveled them on that object. Yes, a tassel. He began to feel a little annoyed; and with this there crept in an obstinate resolution not to make the first move. There was no lack of time. He had all day, all the days, in fact.

"It's that bush fairy."

He formulated this to himself, paddling lazily, content to regard his cabin impassively, with its seamy flaps and its glowing top, which seemed to shift about when he looked at it. It must be almighty hot in there.

The moments drifted by, and with them the cracked banks and the interrupted animals with mud-caked bellies, stolidly belying possibilities. He became unreasonably averse to putting things to proof. This situation, so poignant in the imagining, crumbled with the least motion he made toward that cabin.

"Queer lark, this."

He tormented himself to find his

image of the ward of that great man. Vixen. Vixen. The cook's word for it. But would she have this sort of daring, this particular insanity under that sun—jumping into the leaky boat of a runaway sailorman on a cruise for tucker?

He was certainly annoyed. He felt as if something had descended on him, in a cloud, invisible—and with this power to stir his senses, clog his reason, baffle his experience. It worked corruption to his blood, even. He felt an ardor upspringing, in a foaming current, smothering his heart; the ardor of youth, of dreams, a swift assault upon him by these impulses which he had overthrown long since, to be lord of the earth and his occasions, untrammelled. It was a thing sudden as a spark, consuming, nourishing itself on nothing, on that yellow tassel. For one instant he renewed himself, deep sunk as he was on that lonely river, drawing upon the magic of solitude, and his thoughts were rapid, a golden flight across the glowing sun. And for that instant he felt his heart shaking him. Pest! The heat was turning his head.

He dipped his paddle and composed himself. Men out here were always fancying women gliding across their trails. Hitherto he had steered clear of that weakness. He was growing old, then, couldn't steel himself. These soft entangling arms! Looking back, he counted three good partners snared in them, lost to him, lopped away from him like limbs, and he was conscious that in fact some share of his life blood had gone with them. Two of them had died fighting, going out like men, even in the coils of that last weakness. But the third—he could see him, now, that fellow, slim, freckled, ardent, as good a mate as ever lay aloft to stifle and stow a t'ga'ns'l. There he stood, over that campfire, beaconing now across the years, with a kind of fearful perplexity in his brown face, with its rough shock of hair; the look of a man shot, after the first paralyzing moment.

"I'm going back," he had said. "That girl—"

He couldn't understand it himself; he was drawn back, down, in a current, like

a man into a gulf of waters, out. And the big Yank, who now sat recalling him, staring at that cabin, remembered how he had pleaded, fought, ridiculed, in vain. That fellow had simply walked off into the night, without looking back. It was like destruction. He'd never seen him again. He remembered the set silly smile on his lips; his eyes, that were like caverns, with a secret glow at the back of them. Plague take him and his girl! A fine litter they'd have by now.

Again his eyes came to rest on that tassel. A child's folly. There was no one in his cabin. That sly vixen—yes, he would take the cook's word for it—that vixen had looked into it and away again for a lark, leaving that tassel, like a taunt to him in his complacency. But at that moment the slight fragrance fell against him again, staggering, like a wave, irrefutable. And again he was conscious of an added weight dragging at his paddle. Battered beyond endurance by these stealthy evidences of that neighborhood, he stopped paddling, and reaching out a hand to the starboard stanchion, unhooked the burlap.

VI

HE blinked, and lowered his head. Ah, so there was someone there, at all events! A girl—a grown girl, too, thought the Yank, gazing at her with the same lively interest he might have shown for some deep-sea fish which had never come to light before. She sat cross-legged in his bunk, in a kind of precious disorder, with the golden rope of her girdle running away from her waist and ending in the yellow tassel. Her hair, too, was yellow and tumbled, and the white dress smirched with mud, where she had swept the banks in her quick descent. One arm, white and round and rigid, with the little wrinkle at the elbow deep, was thrust out to a stanchion for support, and the wide flowing sleeve fell away from it. The big Yank, avid of detail, saw all this before he met her eyes squarely. When he saw that they were blue, but more-

over hard with fear, with horror, he said simply:

"Well, by the piper that played before Paul!"

He swore by this musician only on state occasions.

The girl began to breathe rapidly again, as if after long repression, with quivering little intakes, on which her breast rose and fell pitifully. Deep in the shadow of the cabin, she leaned toward him; and he saw then that she had a rusty pistol in her lap.

"Don't stop," she said. "Go on."

"Where's the—party going to be?" said the Yank, impressed. He remembered how, in silently composing her, he had had her shoes gaping at the top; and behold, not shoes, but slippers, white, soft-seeming things, with a pitch down to the soles from towering little heels, clay-covered.

"Just paddle," she retorted in a whisper. "You've got to take me to the town, without it's being known. Something has happened and I—I can't go by the road."

"That town is a week away by this river," said the Yank, whispering in return, as if he were already in possession of these secrets with their charm, their dread, crowding upon him out of the bush.

"I know it."

"We can't very well—"

"We've got to," she said, and then he saw the muscles tighten in the arm which held her away from the stanchion, and she lifted the pistol out of her lap.

"You've got to," she said then. With vivid lips and deep eyes, she leaned nearer still, launching those compulsive shafts. The eyes had an evasive depth, like twilight, full of invisible urgencies. This soft, mysterious presence was suddenly wound all about him, forcing him, and he felt that he was going to do whatever she required, without comment. His compliance was more than the humoring of a caprice; it was born of a tyranny from without, before which he fell back, a little grimly.

"Well," he said, "I reckon you've got the drop."

Watching her, he put in the paddle again with a kind of craft, as if he really intended to do something about this, though he might seem to submit. This was the story he had heard about them: that they always had their way. Burying himself always in these remotenesses, he had accustomed himself to going as he pleased, like a conqueror. There was nothing a man couldn't do with men. But women! And now more especially this one, flashing upon him with suddenness, scintillating in a gloom, with the violet suggestion in the eyes, the downright posture, and all these things, white and golden, streaming away from her, like the testimony of things routed to her willfulness. A premonition went through him, like the first tremor of defeat. His vision was clouded; his day full of unaccountabilities. She was indeed a vastly provoking ripple on the smooth surface of the day's blankdream. . . . The boat went faster and faster, and the water smacked against the overhang forward.

Raising her head, she looked squarely at him again; and that look went deeper than the sunshine.

"We must travel by night, too, if we can," she whispered, and shivered slightly, stirring the soft stuff on her bosom.

These minute whisperings made over the very banks of the river into a conspiracy of intentness. The least sounds of the bush were silenced, as if to allow these mysterious syllables to pass over them to the ends of the earth. He remembered how he had frightened the rabbit. He had yelled then, knowing that he could not be heard; now, as he bent closer to her, experiencing that fragrance, the incomparable softness and delicacy of her against the crude stuff of his boat, like a thing encumbering him, he whispered, too, as if he feared the communication of his lightest word to the secret sources of her dread, lurking, as they must, somewhere behind those twisted gum trees.

"You're being followed, then?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And why?"

Obdurate silence grew between them; and presently he drew in the paddle.

"If you're running away from Sir Robert," he said gently, "it's a bad move. You take it from me—"

He stopped at the expression in those eyes, dilated wide.

"Can't you paddle," she cried despairingly, "without wanting to know? You'll not know."

"I could paddle back and find out," he suggested. "That's the proper thing—paddle back."

"Well, then," she said, and he heard her breath drawn through her teeth, "you'll not paddle back."

And for the second time she lifted the pistol into sight. Ah, that was it, then. He had come all this way of his own accord, sought out this river, like a dog making a bed for itself, and now he was to be driven along, willy nilly, with a chit of a girl holding a gun to his nose.

"You've got the drop," he said again, politely. "Yours to command. But that's a nervous-looking gun."

Again the boat forged ahead under his powerful strokes. He caught himself looking back over his shoulder as he made the bends, following the direction of those glowing eyes, distraught, with their haunted depths. Noting the rigid pose of her body against the stanchion, he said:

"It can't be as bad as all that."

But by now every influence of the bush was stirring him into a kind of reasonless activity. He felt the chase growing upon him momentarily, and put forth all his giant's power. The muscles in his arm leapt and sank tortuously, agony muscles, grown there in many services. The boat quivered to his strokes; his dark face shone with sweat; and the burlap curtains swayed slightly. By the leaves on the water he saw how he was outrunning the current, whose pace was his own pace; and then he understood that the expedition, by this strange chance, had been snatched out of his hands. Something at last was enforced upon him.

But as he worked his mind was busy. The fat, pink cheeks of the passenger he had left behind hung before him, in the

heat. Those burnt, wobbling cheeks became all at once portentous. The man had gone in, and she had come out, all within an hour. How was that? The rambling words of the cook, too, came back to him in snatches, like vague lights. Sir Robert's inquiry about the day of the month, the shocking face he made over that step on the veranda. And now something had happened. His mind twisted like a snake through the maze of possibilities. What had happened, then?

He stole a look at the pistol; and another, and another; and decided that it had not been fired recently. Doubtful even if it was loaded. A precautionary pistol. Driving on furiously with his paddle, he recalled the words of the ancient swaggie, that she was a "good plucked 'un; skin like a byby. Wouldn't arst yer t' work." He smiled grimly at that thought. Wouldn't ask him to work? What would you call this, then? In his preoccupation, he sheered the surface of the river in bringing his paddle forward, and sent a warm frayed sheet of water, burning in green diamonds, over that white dress.

"Sorry," he mumbled.

Staring over his shoulder, she made no answer. Moment by moment, she seemed to feel this menace drawing closer, without noise; something which must crush her finally. His big shoulders drew together; he bent forward like a man under the lash, his eyes fixed on the smooth current breaking into foam under his paddle and gently washing the clay banks. He was like a man crouching under a blow deferred, harrowing him. Yet all the while silence hung round them like a curtain; this everlasting muffling silence of the bush, the heavier for the sudden inexplicable crackings, the creaking of dead limbs, the soft flap of wings and the distant bellowing of cattle; that noise, like a blending of rich horns, which rose on a sad vibrant note, an earth muttering, half protest, half resignation. The very animals were ill at ease in that abounding quiet and abandon.

Time passed. He sat glaring at the river, which slid under him, chuckling

against the warped bottom of the boat. He came again and again to the end of his few facts, made out nothing. He was half annoyed, harassed with doubts. Here he was blindly paddling a girl on a lost river; a pretty girl, frightened out of her wits, descending on him like a perverse gift of cross-grained gods. They were running away, and a devilish kind of together-ness about it, too. A chill crept up his spine; he felt it unmistakably, for a new experience. The thing looked preconcerted; it put him in a wrong light altogether. What was he to say if—

He looked back, and quickened his stroke. Then he cast about for something decisive to say. This childish reticence of hers would have to be broken through. She should talk, or by the Lord Harry, she should leave his boat. Then he looked at her, but no words came. She sat with head averted; a figure strangely soft, affecting him like a slow poison with her beauty. Line by line, look by look, she stole over him, and with no words passing, his quizzical patronage and the slight sense of affront he had cherished at the impertinence of this appeal ebbed. He turned to the river, like a big hulk, high and dry, keeling over. After twenty years of the high seas—in a blow, at a breath, stranded, on an unknown coast.

And suddenly he ran into cool shadow, and raised his head in astonishment. Gazing down the river, he seemed to come slowly to himself as out of a surprising dream. He saw a straight reach shining ahead of him, bound in by walls of clay which rose perpendicularly to a great height. As far as his eye could reach, ahead, these cliffs of burnt clay loomed above them, the stark gums leaning out dizzily over the river, high up. The current of time had quickened perceptibly, unlike the languid and sinuous current of the river over which they hung. He felt that hours had been snatched by him.

"No danger here," he said, trailing his paddle. He gazed, rapt, into the forcible violet of those eyes, which were turned wide upon him, as if in terror of that shadow, which fell with sudden stealth about the boat.

"Maybe we'd better camp," he said. "No way they can get at us here, without ropes. The sun's going."

"Ah, no, keep on," she implored him; and again he dipped his paddle. The walls of clay reared higher; that to the right already frowning in shadow, and the other dying from splotched yellow into rusty red, as the sun fell. Into these surfaces were struck strangely fantastic chance reliefs, caused by the draining of waters from the higher level—towers, friezes, assaulting battalions of fierce creatures streaming downward, as if in an arrested flood of action. And as these surfaces of dim enchantment rose, the sky narrowed, losing its blue virulence, and becoming, low down, a clear green, infinitely graduated. Then across that band of sky, with its fringes of black ruinous gums, there went a plump flight of starlings, black as ink, and then a crow, more swift, on limp, dilapidated wings. The silence on the river, in that gray cañon, was broken only by the rhythmic sound of the paddle, a melancholy protest from the vanished crow; a scarce audible rippling of waters. And these silent walls, darkening, with their nests of bottle birds in rows like little cannon, and their foreshadowing reliefs, seemed to aspire, immeasurably, rising into the sky, and sending down to these two stealthily, in the half dusk that now lay upon the river, assurances of this discretion of nature, which could thus dwarf their odd companionship into a common secrecy, solid as the quiet, in which all things were possible.

Creaking on his seat, he leaned forward, blinking his eyes, half expecting her to have vanished, somehow, into the indefinite bosom of this quiet. But she still sat there, cramped against the stanchion, fingering that golden rope, which seemed to him now like a strand untwisted from her own being, still and yet tempestuously streaming out over the bunkboard, ending in that absurd tassel.

He would have spoken, but through that gloaming she seemed very far, as if his voice could never reach her, without frightening. And again he was struck by a sense of her extraordinary fineness, the incongruity of her presence

here at the bottom of this appalling river bed. His eye fell like a caress on the yellow of her hair, which he had yet to see struck into gold by that fierce sunshine, and on the slim strength and competence of line lurking under those white folds, which the early gloom caused to glimmer. A little golden locket, slung by a chain around her neck, rose and fell, hovering, by which he might see that she was quieter now.

"She could have dressed more sensibly—" he found himself thinking. It had been flight, wild flight, unpremeditated, beyond a doubt. Something that had flashed and fallen here, and now lay, walled in with him, for good or evil, irrevocably.

He drew a deep breath, and found his tongue for one remark:

"Put the curtains up. There's no air in there."

She fumbled a moment and threw them back. He made no movement to help her, just intuition plucking him back from that approach. But as the fallow green light fell upon her, she shrank into the bunk, and at once dropped the curtain on that side, so that his vision of her was of an instant only, wavering out in all softness to him, with averted face, and shrouded again in the gloom of his cabin.

He paddled on, only his arms moving, his still face massively composed, its grave general scrutiny of things belying the tumult, the rising whispers in his brain, from which he resolutely turned. And as he paddled, darkness, like something overhanging in a dream, reached down into that cañon, deepening, rising in a brown gloom, which swept the clay walls clear of definite illusion, leaving them blank and ponderous, the sides of a crevice running on interminably, as if to show that there could be but one path for these two who were lost and swallowed up in it.

"I think we will beach her here," he said. "I can't see the water now."

The girl in the bunk made no movement, no reply; and as he could see nothing of her now either, it grew upon him again that possibly she was not there at all.

VII

As the *Medea* grated on the soft beach, he stepped into the water, and with a slow, powerful movement brought her on broadside and half clear of the river.

Standing up and stretching his arms, he listened intently. The mere silence of the bush, high above, had given place now to a hush, a more deliberate quietude, as if possible utterances were choked by the impalpable thickness of the falling night. And suddenly through that hush there came a hateful gust of insane laughter, as if someone standing above were rocking back and forth on his heels, under the impulsion of some devilish amusing thought. It was like a comment on the futility of things, on the stopped machinery of this world, on the meaningless wastes, the array of bones and fallen bodies and dead gums ringing them round. This laughter, tailing off at length into an exhausted titter, as if it had reached a point where the intensity of the conception throttled it, was taken up far and wide, by indivisible circles, in spasms, paroxysms of unaccountable prophetic mirth, struggling out of unseen throats, and falling hideously through the gloom, suggesting that even in these depths concealment was of no avail. It was merely the evening chorus of the cuckoo burroughs, those cynical birds with hunched shoulders and wise eyebrows, who deride alike the darkness and the dawn; and yet, to the big Yank, standing on the white sands so far below them, the sound was ugly. It was like the fatuous merriment of blockheads who have stumbled on the truth. He glanced at the still figure of the girl, lax in the bunk; and tilted up his head with something like a shudder, for what was ominous in that familiar sound. He peopled the land above him with dark figures, gliding among the gums, over that black jagged fissure, waiting, following after, with a calm patience like the patience of the bush under withering days. He shook himself awake. There he stood with his sheath knife drawn. "Like an old woman," he muttered, and he slipped it back contemptuously and built his fire.

There was something very piratical about him, with the black crown of derby hat—his evening wear—settled over his forehead, and the red handkerchief knotted about his throat. Under his feet twinkled the smooth sands, with their hint of gold, like the touch of art or myth or poetry to that secret place; and over him the early stars were blazoning.

He went to and fro, with stealthy steps, gathering timber for the fire, which must go all night against the dawn chill; and as the yellow glare increased, the shadow of his big body roved over the beach, like a caprice of darkness whimsically attendant on his chance footsteps. And this sprawling shadow that he cast made him seem mightier in his own person. His was a figure to stand alone, certainly; it appeared in his gait, like a willful child's, in his rocking shoulders, in the grave and humorous acceptance of all things in his brown eyes.

Always he had reached his goal each night, wherever he had unslung his swag and built his fire. If he never got beyond it, what matter, since the night was warm? Life, for him a series of gigantic efforts, coming to nothing, had hitherto engaged him like an idleness, a luxury; all things had reached out to him to be considered. Prolonging his youth, he had gone rioting past the finger posts of staid and stay-at-home wisdoms, trusting that when he came, if indeed he ever came at all, to that gray time toward which all these stolid maxims point, some magic in the genius of the road would raise up protection for him, as his bones grew cold.

And now what trick was the sly spirit playing him? Genius of the road, forsooth. He was trapped, haunted, fleeing before he knew not what, full of vague terrors. He was no longer his own man. That slow, masterful current of his being, on which he had idled so magnificently, was now a boiling flood, as if some tributary force, mightier than his own, had entered him. Wrath leapt in him; he felt that she was rising all about him like a tide, softly, tyrannically merciless. She was using him for ends she would not disclose.

He swung his arms, making vague gestures toward the outer dark. He would have to get rid of her. He glanced at her covertly. There she sat, on the edge of the boat, with her feet in the sand, gazing through the fire at the dark clay wall beyond, tensely preoccupied with the faint noises of the bush above. In a twinkling the wrath which his old spirit of singleness had kindled in him died; and a fierce necessity sprang up in him to comfort, reassure. He ached with the sudden intensity of this desire to bear part of that burden, whatever it might be; and holding the fork with which he had been turning pancakes, he made a step toward her. But then an invisible armor seemed to be clamped at one stroke on those big limbs, constraining them, and he remained staring through the tines of the fork into the fire.

"It's pretty bad, but a man has got to eat," he reflected then. Aloud he said: "Will you eat something?"

She shook her head.

He ate his pancakes and drank his tea in silence, thinking that tomorrow he would make her eat. He would begin to assert himself presently, when he had got his bearings. He lit his pipe, pinching a hot coal into the bowl of it with a scarred forefinger.

The unearthly chorus of the cuckoo burroughs had died away, and there was no noise in that black and tortuous fissure, with its looming walls and its one red brazier of light, save the slight ripple of the current, nosing its way along into the unknown, going always toward the sea.

Brooding by the fire, he thought of the lights of Sydney, two months back, the starpointed harbor glittering under cloudless night, the cool deck of that baldheaded old barque under his bare feet, the hilarity of the great port. He had left that port only to make another, some port to the south, which he had never seen, toward which this slow current, rippling past, was imperceptibly making. The promise of life had lain under these innumerable horizons, forever unfulfilled. His progress, blind as that of the current, meant nothing, led him everywhere, nowhere.

His eye fell stealthily again on the figure of the girl in his boat. By the piper that played before Paul! By the long-horned, blue-gilled cattle that went ahead of Moses into the wilderness! She was growing on him! He recurred to her; each of his thoughts took flight, it might have been, from that golden head, bent down, as if she were falling asleep. Ah, falling asleep! His spirit of malice, struggling with pity, moved him.

"Are we going watch and watch?" he inquired, throwing wood on the fire. She started, gasped, threw up her head.

"I had nearly fallen asleep," she said, in a low voice.

"That won't do," he said. "That won't do at all. When you're asleep, I'll steal that nervous-looking gun of yours and paddle back."

Wild terror filled her; she stood up and swayed toward him, with her arms outstretched.

"You wouldn't do that," she cried; "you wouldn't! Can't you trust—only for another day? But not now—you'll not take me back?"

With those mournful eyes pressing him, he said:

"Why, no," utterly abashed. He added incoherently: "Only that gun sort of—"

He stopped ruefully.

Impetuously she ran to the boat, and whirled the aged pistol into the river.

"I trust you," she said. "Even to—"

She stood there against the blackness, like a slender shaft, like a sorrowful caryatid erect under the burden of the black night. The yellow inconstancy of flame played over her; she stood absolutely still, alone, as he was alone, imploring, across a chasm. In a flash he understood that she wasn't afraid of him; that this trust was full and child-like.

"You lie down and—sleep," he said, stumbling over the words. "You'll feel better in the morning. I reckon we're all right here."

He turned away from her and began throwing more timber toward the fire. Then he found a great clay-covered trunk, and dragged it to the fire for a back log, his heavy arms cracking under

the weight. After that he stood watching this blaze and running the red handkerchief slowly over his face.

Yellow devils, he called his fires when alone, and he loved to ponder them, to mark where the fissures opened and the red towers tumbled and the heart of the wood glowed and fell in ashes. So he thrust back the night with his villifying flame, which, in leaping up, imputed menace, ambush, to the wicked gray tangle of the bush above and the great bare trunks of the gums, stripped of bark, showing pale blue and bone color and fanglike yellow. Tonight, behind them, he saw vague forms, relentless and pursuing, hovering above and looking down with evil faces on these sands, with their leaping flames, their inconsequent remoteness. He sat cross-legged on the sands, smoking his pipe, and as he dreamed he felt a dimness about him; the black wall of clay seemed to waver; an angry horde swarmed over the lip of it with gleaming eyes and vengeful faces.

A coal snapped, and spun out against his ankle, and he opened his eyes. The fire had died down; the night was pointed with cold stars; in that dreaming stillness, which seemed to descend out of the blue night, as if mysteriously distilled from above, laying soft restraints upon thought and action, there was no sound but the gentle lapping of the current, eager, successive little voices breaking in chuckles, and one other sound, faint and regular . . .

"She's fast asleep," he thought, looking at her.

"She ought to have a blanket," he began to suggest to himself, but for a long time he made no move. If she should waken . . .

But then, bracing himself, he went over the sands, noiselessly, with a rolling gait. Bending over the stern of the boat, he reached out two blankets from the locker there, army blankets, shot and patched and burnt, which had gone through three campaigns. Dropping one, he unfolded the other and waved it back and forth at arm's length. Then, holding his breath, he came quite up to the cabin, and by aching degrees lowered the blanket over her. Leaning toward

her, he was more than ever conscious of the fullness of her charm, of the oppressive sweetness. As if he breathed some part of it, his heart was slow and heavy and then fast, like the heart of a man laboring on a great height. The red lips, parted, drew him, like a magnet. In sleep the face had lost its look of strain and terror. He came close, wrestling with a mad impulse. What, then, if he merely touched those lips with his, hidden as he was, deep down there, in the bottom of an unconsidered river? What aspersion was there to be cast, or who to cast it? He felt as if something was due to him for all those years of rigid denial, when houses and people were things for him to strike among and shake off, like a frailty. And here was something marvelously in his keeping, like what he had always imagined to hover behind shut blinds, half proffered to him, out of the dark, out of the unquestioning serenity of the night. Was he to draw back—

He bent lower, until even through the shadow which he cast he seemed to see the very grain and impulse of her. But at that moment he saw her very distinctly flinging the pistol into the dark water; with a swirl of her dress, and that binding gesture of trust: something intuitive, an inner strength. She was right; she should be right. He drew back, though the blood was pounding in him.

Taking the other blanket, he lay down by the fire. Then he looked up at the stars and grinned slightly. There was something about this . . . He recalled all those emotions which had surged through him thickly, clutching his heart, as he bent over her. That wouldn't do. He knew only the stable earth. And here . . . Out of a clear sky, too; and in this burning bush, where an old shoe wouldn't turn up if you wanted one. Wondering, he fell asleep.

VIII

WHEN he awoke, the gray chasm of the river walls was faintly touched with red at its top. It was like a raw wet

wound. His fire had fallen, and the air was cold and sharp. Already the cuckoo burroughs were abroad, jeering at this reluctant dawn; and nearer at hand, a magpie, an insolent bird in a black vest and shirtsleeve wings, like a clerk on a hot day, croaked disconsolately, with a sound like a door swung and swung again on a rusted hinge.

He got up, as he had got up these last twenty years mostly, rumped, disheveled, chilled through and through, with the face of a big baboon, as he put it to himself, leaning over the water. His head dripping, he went back to the fire and kicked it into new life, where it lingered among the ashes.

"Holy Mackinaw!" he said then, and looked toward the boat. She lay there awake, muffled in that grim blanket.

"Cold?" he asked.

"Very."

"This chill strikes the river just before daybreak," he went on. "But the sun is coming up now. Stand over the fire."

Throwing aside the blanket, she stood up, stiffly, as he had, and went slowly to the fire. Shivering under the friendly glow, she yawned, and then at once put up both hands to her tumbled hair, more tumbled now than ever. These dawn activities became 'em, thought the big baboon, feeling his rough chin ruefully. She rose out of the trampled vicinity of the fire, like a white flame, in the softness and indefiniteness of her awakening. There was a red mark on the rounded arm as she held it up, where it had fallen over the edge of the boat in her sleep. But her eyes were on that glittering green reach of river behind them, closed in by the cold scarred walls of yellow clay.

They ate hastily of the cook's mutton, while the sun, rising, reached down its first warm beams, livening the surface of the river, dispelling mists, provoking long shadows from above.

Looking at her, with his cup of tea raised, he murmured, "A fine morning, Miss Aury," and felt uncommonly satisfied with himself.

The sun fell on her, singling her out from the gray-white of that beach, with

its feeble glint of gold. She shimmered there like the radiance on closed lashes. But from the checked look on her face, he saw that there was something wrong with the rapidity of that advance; and he set about putting things back into the boat, dumb and baffled. When she came to step in, she turned her head suddenly, showing him, frantically near, the deep violet of her eyes. That swift movement was a deliberate surprisal of him.

"How do you come to know my name, like that?" she said.

"From the cook," he whispered secretly. She turned away.

She seemed to recede from him again. It was as if the sun, in casting down these other shadows, included the shadow of that dread. She turned her eyes past him, to the gaunt surfaces of clay rising so high, with their wet reliefs, their heavy secrecy, their leaning stillness, and the morning sky flaming above them in one long ragged slip. Beyond them she could not look, and she crept back into the bunk and lowered her head.

And for hours they said nothing, while the boat ran on, now gathering speed and grumbling over rapids, and again silently borne on the current, driven by the smooth strokes of that paddle with its vast yellow blade. In a trance he watched his brown fist, swollen over the handle, pass before his eyes, gleaming, and repass and pass again, like something foreign to him, with the darting regularity of a piece of a machine, willing, without will. He felt constrained, lumbering, ineffective—unfinished. He would have to shave when it came night.

Suddenly conscious of a lack of bearings, a remoteness in his attitude, he promised himself that in a moment he would look at her again, say something. He would do it at the next bend. He made the bend, silent, and continued so, with a rising astonishment at himself. He was glib ordinarily, free and easy, a man of genial parts. Who was she to become thus an unwitting licenser of his speech, to provoke him into this nice examination of words, which he fished out of chaos, and flung back again,

dumb, disgruntled? She was too fine, altogether. He began to believe that a man would have to piece together prayers, or something, to address her. In vain he exhorted himself; and after a time he was afraid even to look at her, because he felt that blue eye on him, fathoming his incompetence.

Slowly the clay precipices lowered, and by the time the banks were at their old level, the sun was sinking, too, and the rabbits, lured by the shadows, began to come out of their hutches, watching the strange boat, to the last possible moment, with bright, unwinking eyes, and stock still, bolt upright ears. The day passed, like all these somnolent days, in a blur, in a bluish yellow mist of pitiless heat, through which consciousness ran like a prolonged musing.

It was in the late afternoon that, sweeping the boat around a bend, he held the paddle suspended.

"Draw down that curtain," he said guardedly. "There's a man ahead."

He heard her breathe sharply, saw the fright in her eyes turned toward him, as if to draw promises from him, all in one moment, lingeringly eloquent. Then the heavy burlap fell between them.

Just ahead of him, a big pipe ran down into the water; he heard the hum of an engine, unseen, on the bank above, and beside the pipe stood a sallow man in shirt sleeves, smoking.

"Come far?" asked the man, as he drew down on him.

"Quite a patch," said the Yank, holding the boat against the bank.

"Know anything about the trouble in Lansing's station?"

"No; what's that?"

"Sir Robert's dead; stabbed, 'bout noon yesterday. Stabbed sitting in his chair."

The big Yank's fingers closed about the handle of his paddle in a terrible grip; and he felt his heart stop and then rack itself to pieces in his breast. Sweat rilled all over him.

"No," he forced himself to say.

"Fact," said the man. "An' there don't seem to be but one answer. That bit of a ward of his is gone. They hadn't got on too well together, after

she'd got a taste of the town, y' know. She's like the rest of 'em, fond of the fine feathers; an' he wouldn't have it, old Sir Robert wouldn't. They say he was pretty much of a buck in his day. That's the way with these toffs, once they get out here in the back country. No nonsense for 'em then. She was a fine spirited girl, that Aurelia Damley; but you can't tell what the best of 'em will do, out here. They go mad, with the sun shearing off their pretty complexions. But, my God, to come on him, and stab him! That's not in nature."

The man went on talking comfortably about the event, and brushing mud from the rusted pipe with the flat of his hand.

"If it was a man as done it now, he might get clear," he said. "The bush is a mighty disappearin' sort of a place, as Ned Kelly said. But a woman, man, she's no chance at all."

"You say they're out after her already," said the Yank in a dull tone, looking at his paddle.

"A few of 'em went by this mornin'. She can't be far. She'll have to come out on the roads or die of starvation."

"Yes," said the Yank. "Of course. So long."

He took his paddle out of the bank, and the *Medea* began to move slowly on the current.

"Traveling alone?" said the man.

The Yank looked at his burlap cabin.

"Yes," he said. "I'm not much of a hand for company."

"No more am I," said the man, growing distant. Another bend snatched him out of sight, and still while the dusk grew stealthily the Yank sat staring at the cabin. A great ominous bank of clouds was rising to the south, giving promise of rain and hastening the night. In the minute stillness he heard occasional droppings of dead branches above him.

"All right," he heard himself saying after a time. He kept looking ahead into the rising gloom, at the sharp needlelike silver streaks on the brown water. Then he heard the burlap tear sharply.

"So you—"

He stopped short, feeling her white face intent upon him steadfast in the shadow.

"If you believed it," she said, her voice of breaking pitch, "why did you say you were alone? Why didn't you—"

"Don't ask me those questions," he said stridently. "If you think—"

He stopped again, horribly, his head hung back, staring up with wide eyes, full of a terror like her own. High above, in the fading sky, an ugly bird hovered, with jagged wings, black as ink, outspread, motionless. The big Yank sat transfixed, glaring, the force of all the superstitions he had beating upon him like surf. He felt her lean out of the cabin, following his eyes; and as the meaning of his pause broke upon her, and she saw his dreadful thought fully, she trembled, and he felt the thrill of that trembling through and through him. But in a moment, recovering, she crowded herself against a stanchion, and thrusting her long, slim arm through the gloom, with the palm out, rigid, and the white film of her sleeve falling away from it, she cried despairingly:

"The sheep. It's the sheep he's watching."

IX

ONLY the head of the mired sheep was out of water, that stolid head with fixed eyes and liberal, patient, acquiescing lips. It made no outcry. It had the look of having waited several days, a week even, without turning its head. The river, which had risen slightly, just failed its nostrils.

Turning, the Yank met those calm, trustful eyes through the gathering dusk. It was a Cots', an aristocrat among sheep, with a smooth, noble forehead, a resignation and sublimity of manner, a dumb expectancy . . .

He drew his sheath knife, and reaching over, seized the sheep by the nostrils and tilted up its head.

"We'll have to take our food as we can get it, now," he muttered.

Then he was aware of her, close beside him, tremulous, breathing still that

heavy breath of enchantment on him; and immediately he felt her hand, tense and hot, on his forearm.

"No!" she cried, "not that. No, no, no!"

The silence following was like a weight. With her hand detaining him he said aloud:

"No, by God, it's not true. It's not true."

There was no echo; the bush smothered the cry as it smothered day and all things. With a powerful snap, he drew the sheep clear of the mud and tossed it to the bank.

For an instant the creature stood there, uncertain, its body a disgusting black, its flanks quivering. Then, pointing its benign white forehead toward them through the gloom, it compressed its soft, amiable lips and scrambled up the bank. At the top it hesitated, then baa'd loudly and disappeared.

"Well, what now?" he thought to himself. Night was fast falling, the pink clouds in the south were turned a frowning purple, and reaching higher; giant ramparts, behind which were crouched the forces of heaven, which he knew and feared now for the first time. A drop of rain, blown at a long slant, fell in his face.

And suddenly the banks of this river swarmed out at him, through gloom; he caught again the sparkle of watching eyes, of shadowy figures gliding there, with dark faces, prying out the secret fastness of this wretched girl, with her sweet odors, her languors and mysteries, which had risen about him imperceptibly—like a tide—until now he was bound, smitten by these terrors streaming through the dark. Like a woman.

He dipped his paddle savagely, and the *Medea* shot along at random, though now he could scarcely see the forward part of the boat at all. No matter. Some merciful snag might spring through the blackness and club them out of thought, send them together into these warm depths, with the sands of gold to hide them. With a bursting heart, he felt that he must come to a solution, sharply, as by awakening out of the hideous situation of a dream. Yet he knew, too, that

there would be no such awakening. And he felt that the old freedom was gone, that this knowledge of her crime put before him another knowledge—of these bonds, tight about his heart, which bound him to her—like iron. Under cover of thickening night, floating between these grim banks, with their twisting roots, their snakelike drapings, their dim suggestions of horror which only the nature of his present thought could force upon him, he found himself an accessory, bound over to the consummation of crime. Well, he would get her away, since he had begun; and tear himself clear of her vicinity as he might.

He drove on through the dark, following the slight glitter of ripples which the night wind spread across the shallow stream. After a time he held out his paddle, and then there came the horrible volleying laughter of those birds again, rocking on their dead limbs, invisible, like the involuntary comment of nature on the folly of hope in such a place. Listening, he thought: "What's the end? What's the end of this?" This was what came of wandering, this sudden entanglement, after twenty years, coiling about him in folds without texture, impalpable, final. There was nothing he could reach with his hands, those mighty hands, driving the paddle, which had so far solved all of life for him. This thing rose within him, poisoning his resolves. He was whirled, apathetic, a deadly force without power of his own, through the strange deadliness of that night.

They stole on without noise, in a black void, without vibration, as if suspended in some formless element, disembodied, very speech crushed out of them. He was conscious of thinking: "Why doesn't the woman say something, cry out, sob?"

She was beyond that. She lay huddled in the bunk, motionless, and her soft whiteness, shimmering through the dark, was one with that hushed unreality. But then she shifted in her place slightly and he heard the boards of the bunk creak under her, and at once, in a flood of remembrance, reconstructing her out on the dark, he understood that she was precious, not so poisonous as precious. He remembered how she had

looked pitifully at the mired sheep and stopped the knife with her soft strong fingers, deep in his arm. He could feel them still, plucking him back, back—from what? And now he whispered, as he had called out then in agony: "It's not true." But he dared not question her.

Instead, his mind turned to that evil bird, prospecting on spread wings, following aft, with the leisure of certainty; the black beak, with its cruel curve against the sunset, the humped back, as if ready for a pounce, the ragged wing, disheveled, unkempt, speaking to that hideous outlawry of the skies. His blood ran cold, and since by then the quavering, unearthly chorus of the cuckoo burroughs had died out, he dipped his paddle again and the boat moved on, protesting.

Suddenly forked lightning split the black hold of this abhorrent night to the south; he had a prospect of voluminous cloud, black, turgescient, overhanging all this: these river banks, ghastly gray, with deep sprawling lines and numberless bared roots writhing down, forever failing the water; the leaning gums, with smooth ashen trunks, naked of bark, ringed and mottled, at the dead point before a plunge, and all their twisted branches blunt, where the ends had snapped off. There was a sapped, dead look to them, with the frightful certainty and the frightful impossibility of outlines in a dream. He saw it in one flash, like a deathly composition, with the oily river running through it in a thick imperceptible current, scummed at its edges. It vanished, and he had a sense of something vast and menacing, which had sprung at him once out of the vague, and now crouched meditating, foreshadowing an end.

In that brief moment of illumination he had seen a white beach, curving to his left, where the river turned; and in the succeeding blackness he drove the boat toward it, and in a moment heard the soft hiss of sand under him and felt the *Medea* conceding everything to the slope of the beach.

Silently he stepped out and dragged the boat higher. Groping through the

heavy gloom, he found twigs and branches and built his fire. Now he had a light, and might look at her if he chose; but he was afraid of the expression which might be in those eyes, and he looked instead at the beach, sliding into shadow, and now and then heaped timber on his fire. But if he had looked, he would have found something there, in those tragic depths, which had not been there before, a fierce yearning, a heavy wistfulness, without hope. As she lay in the coarse bunk, with her golden rope tangled about her, she seemed to strain toward him, beseeching, her eyes woefully on the heavy back, black between her and the firelight. But she made no sound.

Then there came another fearful flash of lightning, this time followed by thunder; and then a soft, inexorable tapping among the leaves, a rilling sound in the stilled water, a drumming on the tin roof of the cabin. The fire hissed and spluttered, dying into a dull glow; and turning from it suddenly, he stepped to the forepart of the *Medea* and pulled out of it a heavy yellow oilskin coat.

"Let me put this about you," he said thickly, bending over her. "It will rain in there."

She leaned forward, obedient, and as he settled it about her shoulders, a strand of hair brushed his cheek, seeming to linger. He paused, still holding the coat, rigid; and a pure gust of tenderness passed over him, rising through him like a torrent and washing him clean of those more terrible impulses which not even his sense of horror had rid him of, in deadening all else.

"Move further in," he said.

She receded from him, docile and imploring; a warmth came from her, kindling in his big body an imperishable fire of response and yearning, against which the rain beat vainly.

And suddenly there came out of the black south, from beyond the bend in the river, a prolonged roaring like the noise of an appalling surf gathering from afar. They waited, muffled in thick silence like profuse nothingness, through which the warm rain fell in its own direction. It seemed as if this coming wind must sweep everything before it,

whirling up all the bush into the black heart of its destructive flight. Still they waited, everything forgotten in the common strain of this expectation of the storm. And that terrible, murmurous sound came nearer, nearer, and then, in one moment, with a rending of limbs, a groaning, a rising hiss of tormented waters on the black stream, it was upon them, like a vast rout of all the elements, lashing open the curtains to the boat, pouring about them with a warm voracity, seeming to increase, incredibly; unbreathable, like something fluid, and as if ever renewing, merging all minor noise in one dread overtone. It was like the visible passage of an inexorable spirit through the black spaces above them. The rain disintegrated under it, and sank into their faces in a stinging spray. Stray bits of vegetation bruised their flesh. Turning, they bowed before it, mute, enduring.

Then there came a flash of lightning more vivid than any yet, striking out of this roaring blackness all those thousands of gray trunks rocking in black shadow, bitterly distorted, like sentient beings under the lash, crouching, driven all one way in hordes. And in that moment, held over to the black one following, he saw, with a thrill of questioning horror, a lumbering body running madly without reason amid those reeling trees, plunging forward with head sunk at a blind, groping gait.

But he saw, too, all in the same flash, something which concerned him nearer: a huge dead gum, stripped of branches, swaying on the opposite bank and sinking toward him, like a livid finger marking him out as the victim of the storm. He saw the naked roots draw clear of the soil with terrible reluctance, writhing and alive, seeming to claw for holds. And in that moment it was dark again.

With a flash of the physical decision which years of that life had built up in him, he stooped, snatched up that soft figure under him and staggered along the beach, plunging his body fiercely into the solid fury of wind and rain. Holding her close, he felt her lie unquestioningly there, her heart frightening him. He felt her being like a living

factor of light in that deep void against the rushing of invisible winds; something warm and tangible, which his shoulders crowded over, protectingly. He awaited in blackness the fall of that tree, which to his baffled imagination seemed to hang there into infinity.

Then it fell, clear of the boat, he thought, though it was hard to judge, for his ears were full of the savage droning of the wind, which showed no sign of abating. Hearing the faint splash of the fallen gum, he strained her closer in a mood of overpowering thankfulness.

"On a shoestring, that," he muttered. For the first time he wanted his life, singly, ardently. The rain fell against him in sheets, and he bent his head into it and raised her a little in his arms. Then he felt her wet cheek against his; he bent lower still, kissed her. He felt her lips cling to his, as if in the spasm of some shock, and in that warm, unremitting contact, which gave him warning of this return upon him of outpouring passion, he seemed to be swung aloft, as on a crest of meeting waves, fortified against all else. Into that moment he crowded all his intensity of yearning; as if he might not know the next. It was indeed like a last moment, in which both snatched willfully at something beyond dreams, forever denied them while life had been a commonplace. All his life he had been holding her so, in prospect, as all her life she had been held. Wanderings, strivings, wounds, fevers, all the ills he had heaped upon himself in his restless march; each delay, each tardy moment, each whimsical embarkment, all had tended, with a staggering intricacy of unrevealed intent, to this. And he felt the wind, choked with rain, streaming between their wet faces, powerless in its rush against the rush of this passion, irrevocable, insurgent, unsatisfied, whirling them up out of that crashing desolation, while yet he held her close in the sticky oils, his legs braced, his body leaning forward into the pitch of the wind.

At length he turned, and stumbling back to the boat, lowered her into the bunk, and stood up his spare planks against the cabin forward to avert the

mighty tug of the wind from that frail body. But when she felt his arms leave her, and his presence lost to her by that, for nothing could be seen now, she began to sob—uncontrollably. And this sound of her sobbing, coming to him faintly as if from a long way off, was intolerably sad to him, and the ugly phrases of the storm were all at once appalling portents of this black doom overhanging her; this doom cried abroad to all nature, in a smothered chorus of damned voices, hurried through space on the wings of wrecking winds.

"She can't stand that," he thought, and crept closer. Yet he wanted this racket to go on forever. It put a physical strain upon him which made the other endurable. When it should die away again, that silent blackness would face him with his own thoughts.

"It won't last," he shouted, but the words were dashed from his lips. Then his hand fell against her wet arm, with that filmy sleeve molded on it. She made a pitiful movement of approach, cowed out of all reserve, and he put his arm about her under the heavy oilskins and drew her close.

And presently he felt a pressure on his shoulder, which was her head fallen against it; and after more time a faint glow, at which he shivered, penetrating his sodden clothing; which was the warmth of her shoulder against him.

"Suppose it true even," he thought, "she shall live. Better that than—"

He sat staring into the blackness, torn by that thought; a thousand wild resolves leapt in his brain. She must be got to the coast. He would war upon them all, single-handed. He would find peace for both of them; and she should forget—somewhere.

By imperceptible degrees the storm was going; the thick dark lost its oppressive weight, lifted a trifle; the hiss on the water was less shrill; he saw outlines, a glittering of running water over a black surface; and he heard the wind overhead at a more lingering gait, snuffing and subsiding.

"Who am I, to judge?" he thought. "I have killed—"

Mad scenes of war rioted in him. He

had seen red himself. He knew the irresistible onslaught of that wish to kill, to blot out hated faces. Motionless, he tried to think it inevitable, a thing forced upon a wild nature by circumstance, by the awful monotony of these yellow wastes, with their stark trees, like the fangs of dead animals stuck everywhere.

She drew a little staggering breath, which touched him out of immobility; he bent his head, to catch the sound of her breathing, but not daring to move, as if this position of theirs were final; he held his arm rigid, and felt her soft in the hollow of it.

Then his mind turned to grapple with that horrible figure he had seen, whipped about like a top, running through the night as the gum fell. He knew that it was the man who had bought his knife, and stopped him at the black wattle; and he felt that he was at the bottom of this . . . And hard upon the heels of that came a sharp vision of that great ragged bird circling above them in the sunset. Impossible to rid himself of that thought. He knew that it was still there, invisible, in that furious dark sky, tottering, sliding down the wind, but forever beating back in its wheelings, not to be thwarted—watching, watching.

Then he felt against his side a softly recurrent pressure; and by this he knew that she slept, exhausted; and that knowledge checked the wild impulse he had to plunge into the bush, fleeing from her and from the evil shadow and dread omen of that bird, high above, or so he thought, in the night, veering on ruffled wings.

He sat there all night, without sleeping, without moving almost, holding her in one aching arm. The rain stopped; the wind died; minute, languid droppings made the renewed silence of the bush heavier and more oppressive. He saw himself stopped in what now seemed a gray mire over a black pool; with the one dead limb of the livid old gum tree which had fallen dimly twisted out over him.

Numbed, enduring, he sat there with his thoughts; and the night was like

eternal night. He couldn't imagine the reappearance of that fierce sun which had looked down on him yesterday. Impossible that this black, formless hole should glow green again and the black sky dissolve in burning blue. All that world of vivid color had been snuffed out, the heavens pinched clean together.

With torturing slowness, as if near the end of time, the limb of that dead gum became more strictly visible. It seemed to grow again, to model itself out of chaos, to struggle forth from the mass of a ruined world.

When at last it was distinct, and hung dark and shining over him, with crystal drops trembling from it in the morning wind, the sun came up, startlingly rapid, like something desperately overdue, reddening that murky crevice in the land with brilliant promise, sanctioning the mud, even, and the dead trees, and the poor sodden *Medea*, and for a last touch sending a solid javelin of light into the yellow mouth of a small lizard that crept out upon the limb, his heart beating visibly under his puffy throat.

Looking up at the cold sky, over-arching like a thin film of fresh blue, rent in the east by a great sheaf of glowing yellows rising into it, dispersing it, he saw no moving speck anywhere about, and breathed deeply; then lowered his gaze to that still face against his shoulder, with its beauty, its pallor, its confounding innocence, overshadowed by unutterable guilt. Suddenly she seemed to waver, receding, like a white thing sinking through clear waters, lost, twinkling down, down. There were actually tears in his eyes. He shook his head, but they came again, blinding him. Lost! Lost!

And as this cold light grew, yellowing and sharpening the dead waste through which that idle river ran, it fell with intolerable poignancy on this face, fallen back in sleep, on the thin lips with their divining bow, a trifle pale; on the cold cheek, turned away, as she lay, so that this soft curve, in which he lost himself with wonder, was not completed. And thinking, as men will, that upon a time she had not been, it came to him, like

an argument for a just God, that now she was, in all that felicity, line by line, woven out of inmost dreams. . . .

But then there came beating upon him again and again with ravening force that hideous fact which she had not denied. Up the river a man lay in his study dead with a knife in him. The mournful howl of that dog came back to him with terrible significance. It had been then; just before that—

Looking down at that fineness, at the sweet sleep which the dawn light grew upon, his soul cried "No" and again "No" mightily to this thought that she must be torn from him, out of his very arms. And from that instant it was he, not she, who was pursued. He felt in himself a fierce antagonism to this retribution in the hands of the few who might organize, hanging over them as surely as the sun, more deadly for hovering invisible. They would search the river last, for there were no boats there save his, and it was therefore an unlikely place to look; but they would search it and come upon them in a day, two days, a week perhaps. And then—

"It's man against man out here," he thought, filled with a resolution born in the black night. He knew the full force of that old argument of anarchy, older than Ned Kelly, that man cannot carry his law into the bush but only his gun and his ready hand, no more.

He looked again cautiously into the sky, where in its far hollows, incomparably delicate, flocks of cloud drifted, soft and palpitating with reflected color, gold, rose, saffron. Nothing more tangible. And at the green current, polished, smooth, surging forward, silent, with a surface of mirrored blue and silver, wherein he could see reflected plumes of a celestial pillaging. This current was going to the sea; and he, too, must go to the sea.

Sudden panic seized him; he turned his set face stiffly over his shoulder, looking back with smoldering eyes. Then in a fever of action he lifted her in the rustling oilskins and laid her in the bunk. But as he did so something fell out of the deep folds of her dress, rapping the side of the boat and falling on the sand. It

was the knife he had given that fellow of the black wattle, and a stain, like a corrosion of the metal, ran halfway up the worn blade.

He stood there rubbing it in a dull reverie; and then he stooped and put it beside her again, and going to the locker aft, drew out his gun. He went over it carefully, blowing on the lock and grinding the blue barrel over and over in his rough palm. Then he laid it noiselessly on his seat and swung the boat easily into the river.

Well out on the current, he darted his eyes ahead, behind; penetrating with burning intentness the wet debris on the banks, the huge fallen trunks, covered with slime and insects. Ambush! At the least sound he stopped, lowering his hand to the gun and then reconsidering. Between silent strokes he thought, monotonously: "Not alone—not alone, I reckon," his eyes on that still form with the dragged girdle wound about it.

The rift which had been dawn widened into day, and the sun, falling on her in her fresh disorder, touched her into a livingness of youth and charm, awakening her outwardly, while still she slept, with one arm across her breast and the other by her side, not quite in contact with the black handle of that crooked knife.

Above the river the birds were already softly voluble; the long dapper leaves of the gums which were yet alive hung languid and shining, glowing green after long drought. The deep morning quiet had in it peace, freshness, innocence, unmolested slow awakening to the torment of day. Impossible not to hope. . . .

But as he passed a snag in mid-stream, he saw, gleaming half the length of it a black snake, immaculate, inert, with a thing very like a red jewel fixed in the wicked head, a jewel lapped by seven black and shining shields. He made a rapid pass at it with the cumbrous paddle, but the snake slipped into the water like a darting shadow.

"Have to be careful of these banks now," he reflected. "The river's rising—driving them out."

Then he shivered with consuming black disgust of the place; and the

deadliness of things now, when he sought life so ardently, assailed him for the first time, cramping his heart with that nameless dread which falls so surely, unseen, when the soul aspires, and is bound, as if withering before the leaping progress and unfathomable hopeless end of all desire.

X

THE day passed, and the pursuit had not disclosed itself. All through those burning yellow hours, with their poisonous burden of time, unrolling hopes, despairs, in slow succession, he had sat on his creaking seat, dipping his paddle with a murderous energy, as if unlimbering himself for a last stand. And now, as day again faded from the hot sky, he felt a grim satisfaction in that dying light, and in the uninterrupted serenity of the bush, darkening above, with promise of concealing night.

"It is nearly night now," he heard her say.

"Yes," he answered heavily. Their only words since morning had been to mark the progress of the day. But when their eyes met, there had been a quickening, had passed a remembrance, like a solace, of the wild heart of the storm, of that swift uprising and interlocking of souls under its thunderous, discordant fury.

As he spoke now, he trailed his paddle, listening, and they floated silently over a deep pool, still and black as the ink in a magician's hand. On the banks all forms of trees and animals were dark and tortuous against a green-gold west. He saw a wagtail busy on the forehead of a sheep, pecking about amongst the fleece; two cows, regarding him with woeful, curious, uplifted noses, with wrinkles of disapprobation for this strange invader of their pool. A fish—perhaps the mythical and wily river cod, which he had never caught—leapt in some black border of this pool, and the wide ripples stole out invitingly in silver arcs. In the contrasted light, the clotted foliage of the gums seemed strangely foreign; a fantastic eerie, nowhere. And the quiet deepened and deepened, with

the growing dimness, haunting him; a rich shadow invested all the bush, a brown which darkened imperceptibly as a dying fire, a color warm and rich, out of which came now and again the mad laughter of the cuckoo burroughs and the wrathful screeching of cockatoos.

"We may as well stop," he said. "These snags—"

Suddenly he made out, on a pebbly peninsula, a coal-black rabbit, bolt upright beside a log.

"Supper," he said in a whisper. He picked a stone out of the bottom of the boat, and with his arm hanging lax, drifted down upon the rabbit. He felt her lean out of the cabin so that she might see ahead. So silently they went, and so precisely headed for that little ball of fur, that there was nothing to suggest the altering of distance, unless the growing of the rabbit in the eye. And suddenly the chase sat up, straight as a major, his ears erected high, his little forelegs hanging. There he held himself, as if for vespers, with not even the twitch of a suspicious whisker. So intimately near him in his guilelessness they drew, and so hung upon his attitude, and the little quiver in his jet-black ears, that they forgot all else. The water was only a darker shade of the brown dusk through which they floated. It might have been a charmed river, a dream rabbit, an enchanted boat. . . . He raised his arm.

Then, without warning, they heard the trampling of a heavy foot in the bush above them. The brown eyes of the big Yank turned from the rabbit with a savage twinkle.

"At last!" he cried; and with one mighty stroke he drove the boat into the beach, and snatched up his gun.

Then he felt her slim body, in its woe-ful finery, passionately about him in a fierce resistance to his going; but he shook her off and ran stumbling across the beach to the beginning of the steep bank. Naked roots, crusted with mud, reached down to him, and grasping his gun by its barrel, he swung himself madly up. But at the very moment when he came level with the upper ground he felt a sharp stab in his arm;

and at once a deadly current of ice and flame leapt through all his big body, stopping his heart. Holding himself by one hand, he shook off something dark and writhing from his free arm; and then, his head falling back, he was conscious of a dreadful face, flabby, wobbling, pallid with fear, hanging over him out of the bush, and instantly receding. It was the man of the black wattle.

Then he fell, striking first on some cruelly jagged surface and crumpling up on the soft sand below. But in an instant he was on his feet, full of an overwhelming desire to live. He groped his way toward the boat, unable now to feel his feet, as if, in some shocking manner, he ran upon stumps of his legs alone. He saw her coming swiftly toward him through the gloom; the image of her like the last picture of vivid life his fading brain would ever know. He held out his arm, staring at her with dim eyes.

"The whiskey—forward," he whispered, with bursting tongue, "and the razor—at the head of the bunk."

He sank to his knees; but she was back to him on the instant. There was about a minute and a half to scarify, he knew. Opening the razor, he slashed himself deeply half a dozen times, and would have bent forward to put his lips to the flowing wounds, but she dashed her hand to his face.

"Your lip is cracked," she screamed. Her voice came to him, terribly insistent, remote, tiny, as if something had descended smothering the universe. Then he heard her saying, "Drink, drink," very far off, and felt the glass neck of a bottle knocking his teeth. He put out his hand, swaying over a yawning chasm of blackness, into which everything was sinking, and seized the bottle. Tilting it up, he drank, choking, as if he were to do nothing but that until he died. The bottle seemed coated with some soft substance, like fur; the sands were furry, to his knees. His sense of touch was going, then. He tried to rouse himself, to will something, to persist, even among these damnable shadows wavering upon him; but then an extraordinary sense of well-being invaded him, all torment was

stilled. He ceased to struggle, sinking back into nothingness like a feather through space, and knew only of a dim weight, a soft straining at the arm where blood must be flowing still. She had her lips to the wound, sucking the poison. A good plucked 'un—skin like a baby. . . . His throat burned faintly, like a foretaste . . . He would assuredly go to hell, having taken no precautions . . . Therefore . . .

XI

He opened his eyes stupidly. He had picked up again the thread of himself, somehow, out of that blackness, but it was as if he had lain there forever first. He was conscious only of an immense passage of time.

Bringing his eyes to rest above him, he was aware of blue letters on a yellow ground. "Maltby's White Horse Whiskey." That was the stray tin sign he had bent over his cabin for a roof. He discovered that he lay in his own boat, and his dry hands closed on the wheat bags lining the bunk under him. His right arm was swollen, and ached savagely as he came more awake. Then he saw, still without moving, an enormous system of iron girders, like a lattice work, thrown from bank to bank ahead of him, and through the bars of this a red sun smoldering. Night or morning? Night, he decided, by the warmth. Then he heard the snapping of a fire to his left, and with that sound, so comforting and so familiar, he regained all his personality at once.

Suddenly with a grinding roar a black streak shot among those girders, and vanished.

"It's a railroad bridge," he thought, surprised. How had he come—

And at that moment he heard a voice, her voice, very near him.

"You had better go before the sun falls," she said. This voice was cold, insistent; and there was no answer. Pivoting on his elbow, the big Yank rolled himself half out of the boat and brushed his eyes. She had been kneeling on the beach beside a tiny fire, but she turned swiftly toward him as he rose

in the bunk, and cried out, "Your arm," in caution.

He looked at it stupidly, and found it wrapped in a stained bandage; and directly, sending his eyes in quest, he saw the jagged tear out of the bottom of her dress. He felt somehow as if this were a part of her binding him.

"You cut too deep," she said, and then, seeing that his eyes had traveled beyond her, she turned to the fire again and stood drooping, over it. He was looking steadily at the gross figure of that man, who seemed fixed at the very center of all this madness. He was sitting on a log, inert, like a stuffed thing. His black leggings were scratched and fouled, his cheeks scored, his pale eyes blank and motionless under the shiny vizor of his cap. He sat all slumped together, as if his will had quite deserted him, as if a crushing weight hung from either shoulder.

"So it's you," said the Yank, twisting slightly, and looking over the bulge of his shoulder. "Well, you certainly play in luck, stranger. If it hadn't been for that snake—"

Wrath overcoming weakness, he swayed to his feet. The hopeless apathy of that fellow infuriated him.

"Why, you pusillanimous—"

Something plucked at him unseen, and he shut his mouth on a favorite oath.

"You come dogging along like this, saying nothing—I, tell you, I'd have shot you down—" he muttered.

The man stirred, shook, rippled all over like the flank of an irritated animal. Then he spoke a few words, and repeated them a little louder.

"I wish you had," he mumbled. "My God, I wish you had!"

The Yank, disgusted, speechless with rage at his weakness, at the spectacle of this man with his fat face and his sodden body, moved his swollen arm, and it came against the crooked knife. He closed his fingers round the handle and held it up.

"How's this?" he shouted. The man seemed like a dead symbol, an unresponsive, ghastly figure in a dream not to be moved, not to be assailed by any mortal voice. "I sell you a knife, and

then I find it on this girl. What's the answer?"

The girl shivered over the glow of the fire. The man looked at the knife and came horribly alive.

"Oh, yes, that knife," he said. He made a motion as if beseeching the big Yank to lay it down. "I killed him!" he shrieked suddenly. His eyes rolled in his head, like the eyes of an inverted doll. He brushed a hand across them, and peered stealthily at the knife again.

"That's it," he said. "I could see the sun on his bald head, over the chair—shining—eh? He was asleep, but his arm moved. I crept up on him, from behind, and drove it into him, while he slept. He went—like that—"

He jerked himself forward, and a grunt came from him. He sat there, rigid, staring at the black girders of the bridge. The sun had set.

His fat, indecisive face twisted with sudden passion, with a lingering brutality of reminiscence.

"He was gone," he said in a hollow voice, with a kind of astonishment as if even now he could not believe in that consummation. "I killed him." These words rang clear through his mumblings with a note of finality, of triumph even. "I said I would, and I did. I said it every day for sixteen years, and I couldn't back out then. I say I couldn't back out."

He shouted; his eyes were terrible.

"I was afraid, that's true; but it had to be done."

"That's it, then," said the Yank. "I saw you in jail—in Melbourne. I don't forget faces."

"So you did," said the man. "They all saw me; they came and saw me sitting there, behind those bars, waiting. I was waiting, and they didn't know. He came and saw me, and he didn't know. He knows now—"

He rocked on the dead trunk in a horrible satisfaction, shot with a more horrible fear. He went on again.

"He swore me into that place. God witness it, I was innocent. He perjured his black soul that's gone to dance in hell now. Dance in hell. I was a

man then; I had a wife, a baby—that girl, Aurelia. He never forgave . . . And when she died, he took the child. It was like the mother, it seems, like the mother he coveted. And what was I to do? I waited. I broke stone, and sat in that cell and waited. Sixteen years. And then I came out. A month ago—like this."

The Yank leaned toward him.

"That may be so," he said. "But you ought to have made a clean job with that knife. No use leaving rag ends. What do you calculate to do now?"

"I don't know," said the man dully. "I don't know; that God's truth. I was afraid, afraid when I struck him, afraid. I could hear him breathing—that cursed sun on his head—and I struck . . . Sixteen years—I'd sworn it. It won't be sixteen years this time. Not that. They're closing in. Death this time. That's something . . . I crawled to her, my child. She didn't know me, her father; but she believed. She took the knife, and told me to go. Nobody had seen; I could get away and nobody know. My God, I wanted to get away! I wanted time; I wanted to remember—"

He twined his soft hands together and gasped. He had wanted to remember.

"And how about the girl?" said the big Yank in fierce disgust. "You wanted them to think—"

"Ah, that's it," said the man. "When I could think—I could see. Why not? The daughter of a convict. No, no . . . So I followed along those banks, watching her. She's a pretty thing. Look at her. She might have come to me once—her father. But not now—I'm nothing to her now."

The girl stood tall and motionless by the fire, her torn dress falling in long folds.

"It's this—it's the nights. I can't stand 'em . . . That damned bald head bobbing around."

The man's head fell; he breathed heavily. Without turning, the girl said again:

"You had better go."

"Yes, I'll go," he said; "there's nothing else."

The tall Yank, swaying, made a step toward him.

"Not much," he said. "You're the man they're looking for and they don't know it. It's high time they knew. Are you going to let them take your own daughter?"

"Why, no, that's it," said the man. "I'm going—into the town. I'm going—"

He stopped, as if in that moment he had died.

"Let him go," said the girl apathetically. "Let him go."

The Yank fell back weakly into his boat, and the man went stumbling across the beach. When he came to the bank, he half turned and went on again blindly, shielding his face with his arms, as he had done running before the storm. The faint yellow in the west seemed to be draining away into the heart of remoteness. For an instant they saw his bulky shoulders ragged against it and he was gone.

Then the Yank began to speak.

"This is all true?" he questioned. "You ran away to shield this man, your father; to give him time?"

She nodded faintly.

"But, my God, if he had got away for good, don't you see that you wouldn't have come clear?"

"Yes," she whispered. "But I didn't then. He came crawling to me, as he said—and I thought of those sixteen years; and it seemed the only thing."

He sank away from her, folding himself back into the bunk with one sinuous movement, and looking empty-eyed at the roof of his cabin.

"You didn't know, of course," he muttered, "while you lived with Sir Robert—"

"I knew my father was in prison. Only that."

He looked at her steadily, lying there inert, the roll of his bared arm huge in shadow, with some blurred tattooing on it. And he saw that he was only a big baboon, after all; a crude, gigantic plaything, tossed from sea to land, land to sea, in unavailing alternation. The very fact of him was incongruous, against that slim delicacy, that golden

strength, with its crown of gold dim under the early stars. They were like the ends of two stubborn destinies, bent almost together by the might of some ungovernable malice, trembling on the release, which should snap them back—forever.

There seemed to be no current to his thought now, no impulsion. With a kind of idleness, an impersonal curiosity, he asked:

"How did I come to get in the boat?"

"I dragged you there," she said. "The dew was falling."

"You are strong," he said, wistfully admiring. "Very strong—very beautiful."

He mumbled this truth over to himself, unheeding, like a man who can neither hurt nor further himself by candid speech.

All at once the sight of her was more than he could stand.

"You've no more need of me," he said, bitterly abrupt. "You don't need anybody to go killing off people chasing you. That's over . . . Oh, yes. I'd have shot him. I'd have shot him down like a dog, if the snake hadn't struck. I'd have shot them all down. I meant to make a red track of them clear to the coast, if it had to be. I meant to get you clear . . ."

His voice was nothing now but a fierce whisper.

"I thought you did it. That's the man I am."

His head fell forward; he lost himself in the rising gloom.

"There was another girl once; a nurse in Akron, Ohio—Medea—you'll see her name on the boat. I had a wrong idea about her once, and she turned me out. Been going ever since."

He felt that she stood there with her cold eyes sending down withering judgment on him. For the first time there seemed to be just meaning in that mad laughter of the birds echoing round, as if through emptiness.

"How did we get down here?" he asked idly, unable to bear that silence.

"The river rose," she said. She was very close; her voice trembled. "Three or four feet. I couldn't hold the boat,

so I steered. You slept all night and all day. And he followed—along the banks. I could hear him."

He heard her breathing faster.

"I've done what you asked," he said. "Here you are at the town. I'm all right now. A little rest. You might push me out into the current; I think—I'll drift along a bit."

She made no move, but stood there in that torturing proximity, robed in shadow. And suddenly these wastes, these desert spaces, the whole idle wild, rose to confront him with their emptiness, their frightening emptiness. He was afraid, like a child again, softened, as if she had drained away his strength, his singleness, with those soft lips, in sucking out the poison. He was afraid to go on, leaving her there, shimmering, growing fainter, vanishing for all time. He was accustomed to conquest; and now he felt ultimately beaten, bound by a million thongs. Getting on had lost its meaning, had become abhorrent at the very moment when it had become most necessary.

Suddenly a crow flew over the river, a dark shadow, with the speed of thought. It came close; they heard the siffle of its wings.

"That's bad," he thought. "These cursed birds."

Then she spoke, in little sobbing breaths.

"Do you suppose I care what you thought? Who wouldn't think? You wouldn't give me up. You'd have seen me through to the coast. I know it. Why—ah, why?"

He half rose again, straining toward her. Why? He had a question he could answer now. All these other questions that had baffled him, drawing him on; questions that had plagued him as he lay out on rocking yards, in storms, with the black oaths of struggling men

in his ears, the bourdon of wild canvas; questions that had leapt out at him under burning suns, over blinding snows, lashing him on, on to the end, the end of youth, of hope, of life, they had their answer here.

"I—wanted—you," he breathed, with parched lips. "But, I'm telling you—I thought—"

"What do you think now?" she said. "You've seen him. What do you think?"

She was close beside him now, not daring to look up, vague, tremulous, despairing of him.

"With that blood in me," she added, in a spirit of passionate precaution.

"That blood?" he said stupidly. "There's no accounting for where a flower—"

He stopped. She seemed to be nodding toward him through the dark, swaying, sinking—toward him. He saw her arms, white in the dark, those slim, strong arms that had lifted him, in all his worthless bulk, outstretched, forbidding, opposing him, entreating him—prisoning him.

"If you went," she whispered, warm and riotous against him, "I should die. I'm afraid—afraid to be alone."

"That's it," he said eagerly, holding her close with a great wonder. "That's the trouble with me. I'm afraid to go on alone. Queer thing, too; I never was before."

It was quite dark now; the bush hung over them like a rich tapestry, dimly wrought with figures, a great, silent pageant of the wild, assembling its moods, its yellow inconsequences, its prone spirit hovering in silence, defeated. And the unseen current, rippling against the boat, went its way, unchecked, unhurried, toward the port that he would never see. He had dropped his eyes from all horizons.



IN the spring the young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of the same thing young women think about all the year round.

THE SIN EATER

By Ruth Comfort Mitchell

HARK ye! Hush ye! Margot's dead!
Hush! Have done wi' your brawling tune!
Danced, she did, till the stars grew pale;
Mother o' God, an' she's gone at noon!
Sh-h! . . . d'ye *hear* me?—Margot's *dead*!
Sickened an' drooped an' died in an hour!
(Bring me th' milk an' th' meat an' bread.)
Drooped, she did, like a wilted flower.
Come an' look at her, how she lies,
Little an' lone, and like she's scared. . . .
(She lost her beads last Friday week,
Tore her Book, an' she never cared.) . . .
Eh, my lass, but it's winter, now—
You that ever was meant for June,
Your laughing mouth an' your dancing feet—
An' now you're done, like an ended tune.
Where's that woman? Ah, give it me quick,
Food at her head an' her poor, still feet. . . .
There's plenty, fool! D'ye think the wench
Had so many sins for himself to eat?
Take up your cloak an' hand me mine. . . .
Are we fetchin' him? Eh, for sure!
An' you'll come with me for all your quakes,
Clear to his cave across the moor!
—Margot, dearie, don't look so scared,
It's no long while till your peace begins!
What if you tore your Book, poor lamb?
I'm bringin' you one will eat your sins!

II

It's a blood-red sun that's sinkin'. . . .
Ohooo, but the marshland's drear!
Woman, for why will you be shrinkin'?
I'm tellin' you there's nought to fear.
What if the twilight's gloomish
An' th' shadows creep an' crawl?—
Woman, woman, here'll be th' cavel
Stand by me close till I call!
"Sin Eater! Devil Cheater!"
(Eh, it echoes hollowly!)

THE SMART SET

"Margot's dead at Willow Farm!
Shroud your face and follow me!"

III

One o' th' clock . . . two o' th' clock. . . .
This night's a week in span!
Still he crouches by her side. . . .
Devil . . . ghost . . . or man? . . .

IV

Woman, never cock's crow sounded sweet before!
Set the casement wide ajar, fasten back the door!
Eh, but I be cold an' stiff, waitin' for th' dawn;
Fetch me flowers—jessamine—see, the food is gone. . . .
Light enough to see her now. . . . Mary! How her face
Shines on us like altar fires, now she's sure o' grace!
Never mind your Book, my lamb, never mind your beads,
There's th' Gleam before you now, follow where it leads.

V

Tearful peace and gentle grief
Brood on Willow Farm:
Margot, sleeping in her flowers,
Smiles, secure from harm:
In a cave across the moor,
Dank and dark within,
Moans the trafficker in souls,
Freshly bowed with sin.



PURE FICTION

"WE enjoyed your visit so much."
"Say, Central, I've been waiting twenty minutes."
"My wife and I never had a word with each other."
"I never wore a hat that cost less than eighty-five dollars."
"I've had only one drink today."
"I never put myself out for company."
"We did not have a fly in the house all summer."
"I've got to meet a customer tonight."
"We never have trouble keeping servants."
"I was reared in luxury and refinement."
"When the baby came their happiness was complete."

CHARLES CHISHOLM CANTILEVER: "BEST SELLER"

A Page from the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson-Howard

IN years to come, philologists and sciolists of the twenty-first century will exchange amazed glances, as, from dusty libraries, they drag down, and attempt to read, the curious popular "literature" of today, with its gaudy illustrations depicting idealized peasant girls in silks and satins—bovine creatures of body and lack of mentality, who pass for the queens, duchesses, millionaires' daughters and other highborn ladies whose adventures the public of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries bought in lots of from fifty thousand up. These scholarly gentlemen will wonder what race of men so lacked a sense of humor: and this story is written to assist them, for it proposes to show one of the race—an attempt for which all should be grateful, since publishers do not circulate such portraits plentifully. Nor are publishers any more liberal with biographical information concerning them: the authors would not be able to write such wild tales of adventure and daring, nor such chronicles of the fashionable world, were they adventurers, themselves, or, at least, men of the world.

Charles Chisholm Cantilever was typical of the class; both in biography and appearance. He was fleshy; he was almost bald; and he had never left his native town in the Middle West where he was in the harness trade until his first story had been accepted. At the time he wrote it, "manly" writing was in vogue—stories in which "primitive" or "primordial" occurs frequently, and in which melodrama as weird and

wonderful as any perpetrated on Eighth Avenue is excused because it has the background of "the wild." From a metropolitan editor's standpoint, it would appear that melodrama is thrills in civilization; *drama*, thrills 'mid London's icy mountains.

Cantilever had written many rejected stories; but one summer he had met an astute literary agent at a nearby resort, and this agent had instructed him as to the latest fall fashions in fiction. The "wilds" story was the result.

The agent took it to a magazine as old as the history of American letters; whose subscription list, several months before, had seemed to be made up of subscribers quite as old. Despite numerous stories in the very best form in which nothing whatsoever happened; despite the fact that these tales were made up in equal parts of the most careful New England dialect and of "fine writing"; despite more than occasional colored plates illustrating at least one historical narrative in each issue (which the artist often wrote himself around the pictures, historical short stories being hard to get); and despite a scientific article by the very best and very dullest authorities on what the larvæ of the Caddis-worm looks like under the Great-Horn-Spoon microscope; despite, we say, all these conjunctive portions of sentences, that venerable valetudinarian was losing much money. Its old subscribers were dying and possible new ones said it ought to die, too.

At about this time, there appeared a book about the wilds that was real liter-

ature. Regretfully the valetudinarian's sponsors were forced to believe this must be so, for every respectable literary journal affirmed it. In the sponsor's opinion, the story was a trifle low, since things were always happening in it. Furthermore it was not historical, not about New England, and almost totally without conjunctions. But not for them to argue with the best literary authorities! So gradually a vague conviction came that, if they could secure such a story, others beside men eighty years old might subscribe to their periodical. This had been hinted to the literary agent who now bore them Cantilever's story. It was also a trifle low (men spat tobacco in it and the "damns" were spelt out, indicating "strength"); things happened in it all the time; it was not historical, not about New England, and almost totally without conjunctions.

Since the other tale was literature, this—so much like it in all salient particulars—must be literature also. The valetudinarian broke a half-century-old rule and accepted a story by a new writer. Also, they sent for the new writer and impressed upon him the solemnity of the occasion. Since they had accepted his story he must be a genius: he must strive always to be a genius. Certain crudities (even genius could not be permitted to split its infinitives and say "farther" when it meant "further") must be eliminated. Also, the editor tried to show him that the conjunction was a very gentlemanly little punctuation mark and made easier reading than frequent shoot-you-in-the-eye periods. He was implored to study the work of Mary E. Pinklinham and H. Popcorn Smith, apostles of the divine commonplace.

Also he was urged not to have so many things happen in his stories. Of course, the editor understood that you could not have the new literature of the wild without at least having a timber wolf howl at a Malamoot dog. But why, on top of that, have the Malamoot howl back at the timber wolf? Why not save that for a sequel? One howl was sufficient for one story. Popcorn Smith had done it. Popcorn had written a

whole story on how it made him feel to look at an old hat he had worn on the occasion of his only time of voting when he had found the other voters so rough that he went home and wrote a story about them and never voted again. The valetudinarian had printed the story and thought it served the voters right. Cantilever was recommended to study this story as a masterpiece. True, it was not about New England, but then one couldn't have everything.

Cantilever walked out of the office as a king walks out of a coronation chamber, and soon the cognoscenti were climbing six flights to his studio, sitting under paper lanterns eating studio delicatessen and talking about their souls. The uglier the men and the scrawnier the women, the bigger souls they had. Cantilever soon arrived at that stage of shame where he could call the cognoscenti to order solely to read them something he had just written. He soon became an adept in taking a very small quarter of an incident, dressing it up in very large words, putting in much dialect and many descriptions of the weather's influence on character, and calling the whole a "psychological" study. After he had published continuously in the pages of the valetudinarian for nearly a year and had been acclaimed as one of the greatest of the "wild" writers, the editor of the valetudinarian advised him to begin a novel which, if written along the lines of his short stories, would receive publication in the magazine and—the imprint of its publishing house. When these things had been done it was acclaimed "the great American novel." A playwright used its title and several of its incidents for a "dramatization"; while the novel, reprinted after various editions in cheaper form, enjoyed a steady sale for many years.

For, in justice, let it be said, Cantilever was no ordinary writer. True, he took seriously everything the public took seriously, but he expressed his sentiments through men speaking the rich slang of the West (then little exploited); the text in contrast to his dialogue, written with that regard for trifling details and in that polished peanut style

that passes for Stevensonian English in the "culture" clubs. It was as though George M. Starspangledbanner had taken to novel writing using Charles Lamb for his model; or a less suave St. Augustine Thomas to surrounding his sallies with descriptions.

Soon afterward, one saw pictures of Cantilever in literary magazines, standing before his "pretty country home," or riding "in his new car." Photographers clamored for sittings, free. Some associate editors went up for week-ends to write articles about his life and work. He was a "best seller," but, more than that, he received the praise of the tame critics as an excellent craftsman and delineator of character, none of your reincarnations of Mary J. Holmes and Sylvanus Cobb who imitate Anthony Hope with a Chicago accent. Also, he drew royalties on a play, nine-tenths another man's work, but, for using the trademark of his successful novel, three-quarters his. In a phrase he was one of the glories of American lithrachoer (as distinguished from literature); but, when he clumsily tried to make love to Molly Macquoid, she was very angry at such a ridiculous little fat man trying to "make fun" of her.

Molly was in love with Ned Winchester.

II

CANTILEVER had known Winchester ever since each had published his first book. The valetudinarian's publisher brought Winchester's out too, and the two authors had met in the office while waiting for royalty statements. Winchester's book, recognized as a valuable contribution to literature, showed less than a thousand copies sold. Cantilever was almost as sorry for Winchester as Winchester was for him, and the former, insisting on their dining together, had explained to Winchester the faults of his style and system. He had read Winchester's book only because the publisher had sent it.

"You want Action," said Cantilever. "And Love. Something doing all the time. Now, when your man goes out to

rob the priest—you should never have him rob a priest anyway: look how many readers you offend that way—"

"But that was the point," said Winchester. "The man was an ignorant but sincere Christian. He finds that the priest has committed a sin and it ruins his belief in Christianity. Then when the priest catches him at the robbery, the man shoots it back, and the priest wakes up to the fact that his life is not his own, that ignorant people today are the same as when they prayed to idols, only, now, the priest's the idol."

"But that isn't so," said Cantilever positively. "A priest is a man. An idol was stone or wood. It couldn't *intercede*. The priest *can*."

Winchester gave him up. Cantilever continued triumphantly: "But let that go. I was talking about *Action*. Your man goes to rob. You get your readers excited. But, on the way to the robbery, you have page after page telling how he *felt*. Now, frankly, I skipped that. I wanted to see how he got into the house and whether he got caught or not. *Action*. See?"

"I see," said Winchester.

"Well, that's *one* point. Now about Love. If you'd had him rob the priest for some girl's sake—not selfishly, you see—to give her dying mother some fruit or wine to make her last moments easier—"

"But the priest would have *done that*," objected Winchester, smiling.

"Wouldn't accept it from a Catholic—that would make a hit with your Protestant readers. No, sooner die than take anything from Romish idolaters—something like that. Or if the girl's brother was in trouble—going to jail, say—Hero risks jail himself to save brother. Better still: have *him*—the hero—a Catholic and believe that he'll be damned eternally for robbing the priest. But Love—Love conquers all. Afterward you could have him won over to the Protestant Church, still by Love. Love and Religion, both. Religion's *good*. I'll use Religion, myself, in my next. Then a lot of people'll buy it who wouldn't buy ordinary novels. Look at 'Ben Hur'—millions! See?"

"I see," said Winchester.

"Now about your heroine," Cantilever went on; "she's married and you have her in love with another man—the priest. But *that's* not what I'm criticizing. You could have made a *beautiful* story of that if you'd had her cherish her secret all through the years. But *he* knew; *he* knew, because her hand trembled at confession or something and betrayed her. And he loved her, too, but his vows were sacred: that makes a hit with your Catholics. *Beautiful*, see?"

"I see," said Winchester.

"And then she sacrifices her life to save something of his—well—say, some book, religious book—his life's work. Fire! She runs back into burning house, tosses manuscript out of window, he becomes a Cardinal through it; then, finally, they offer to make him Pope. 'No,' he says, 'no, for in my heart I was untrue to my vows. And, even yet, a woman is enthroned there. I cannot be your Pope.' See? *Beautiful!*"

"I see," said Winchester.

"Then"—Cantilever paused, exhausted. "Then—well, anyhow, that's the *right* way. But a *good woman deceiving her husband—a good woman—brought up right!* . . . No, *sir*. It's not nature. Not a *good* woman. If you could have shown how she really was a *bad* woman, posing as good. But good women don't do such things. See?"

"I've got to be going," said Winchester, rising. "Important engagement." He never allowed himself to be entrapped into a lengthy conversation with Cantilever again.

But they had met on the street when Winchester was in town during the big snow season; and to avoid having Cantilever talk, Winchester had told him how cheaply he had bought land in the wilderness. Cantilever had always cherished a desire to be the squire of some rural district, to have a "manor house" with a moat and the villagers touching their caps. And, besides, he was in that frame of mind that results from too many poker parties, too much drink, too much Tenderloin. He spoke sentimentally of the "fresh, pure life of the

country." So, when the spring thaw came, he sent up a surveyor and an agent and bought up some hundreds of acres. Later, "a manor house" with a moat was erected, and that summer he took possession.

All this had been some years before: during which he had tried to soften the heart of Molly Macquoid; and she had been equally unsuccessful in bringing her affair with Winchester to any satisfactory conclusion, though she haunted the woods near his house and invited herself to lunches with him. For Winchester had read her eyes long since, and was determined he would do nothing that would give her any hold upon him. At that time, he was just beginning his biggest work: he meant to prove that Nature's cruelties always resulted in great good, shedding new light on history by showing cause as well as effect. It meant solid work and he could not be bothered by girls.

So Molly revenged herself by making Cantilever's life absolutely miserable, torturing him with an ingenuity worthy of an inquisitor. Yet he stayed on and on through the winter season, even through the big snows. He knew so little of women that he believed he could "make her care."

III

"LIFE is a comedy to those who think," said Horace Walpole some centuries since. Ned, being a thinker, got most of his amusement watching his brother humans take on self-importance (because they had wasted their lives acquiring what would never benefit them), struggling for social and political honors that were the strait-jackets robbing them of what little freedom life had allowed them. And, of all countries under the sun, he found his own the most amusing; for here almost everybody was pretending to be somebody else; with "bluff" and pose, accent and conversation, clothes and houses, servants and motors; putting their souls' prison cells so deep that they never saw sun nor stars, nor anything else worth seeing.

Naturally, such people being in the majority, the public did not appreciate a writer who showed them in prison when they wanted to think they were in a castle. So Winchester contributed only to those periodicals that reached the people who loved the truth; not a hundred thousand in a country of a hundred million. With small subscription lists, these periodicals could not afford to pay high prices. But Ned did not care. To lie outdoors in clement weather, or in the winter high up in his mountain cabin, hours upon hours, thinking out cosmic problems; then, flushed and happy, to seize a pen and write, rejoicing in the rhythmic ring of his sentences, polishing each until it was an individual of truth, conciseness, and lyrical quality—such a life does not leave room for many physical cravings. Ned was not bothered by his body: to him it was but the tool of his mind. It is astonishing, when one really knows how to enjoy life, how little the life of the city means, with its restaurants and theaters, women and wine. Ned found the fish and game the woods and the streams afforded more to his taste than French cooking. He saw scenery more wonderful in sunrise and sunset, drama more absorbing in the play of ideas than theaters could give him. As for women, he had found that they would come into a man's life whether he willed it or not, and, when they did, the incidents were all the more charming because they were unsought and unexpected. The search for them, with vine-leaves in the hair, he left to the unintelligent who needed false excitement to enjoy life.

Such was Ned Winchester at thirty-five, and the difference between him and Cantilever could not be more marked in anything than in the way in which Molly Macquoid affected each. Ned had noticed her as particularly pretty but had never thought about her twice. Charles Chisholm Cantilever had written two novels with her as heroine; but, when in her presence, found his writing vocabulary too florid for serious use, and he had lived too long in a sentimental writing-world to have any other for a "good" woman. Had she been the other kind,

he would have been worse than a bore, for he flattered himself he knew how to handle *them*, not realizing that one of the handicaps of their profession was to endure such as he. But a "good woman" . . . He felt it was the proper thing (as per his novels) to abase himself before her purity and, after telling his sad story, be given a chance to make himself worthy. But Molly never gave him any chance even to tell the sad story: in fact, she was apt to hum tunes if she sensed any elephantine efforts to approach elegies and eulogies. He had lost track of the number of times he had been forced to blurt out a proposal of marriage without any chance to lead up to it, dramatically, by humilifics.

Of Molly, there is nothing in particular to know except that she had been gifted with slow Chinese eyes and a little lazy body of surpassing sensual charm, to which the life of the little backwoods settlement had added a ruddy glow, so that her clear tawny skin was continually alive with color. Her teeth were as white as those of any other of the forest animals; nor did her ideas of life differ greatly from theirs, although she had for a parent the district circuit-rider who, during his brief stays at home, had instilled into her certain of Mr. Peloubet's able Sunday excerpts. Her mother, of a family that had been *bourgeois habitants* for years, was as respectable as she was dull, but she was wiser than her husband, knowing Molly was not meant to be what she (her mother) called a respectable woman, so wished to shift responsibility to some marrying man. Therefore, she rejoiced at Cantilever's repeated proposals and made Molly pay heavy penalties for rejecting them. She imagined it was because of these that Molly finally accepted and married him: the real reason would have shortened her years by a score.

IV

It was none other than the departure of Ned Winchester to New York for the one reason sufficient to recompense him for the loss of his silences, solitude and scenery: the editorship of *Parnassus*, to

which he had been long a star contributor. It had been unexpected: there was nothing to choose between him and his predecessor, both being of equal philosophical and literary stature, both absolutely altruistic in their devotion to high literary ideals, both destined to emerge from contemporary obscurity (so far as public appreciation went) into enduring fame. But an accidental germ intervened and left Winchester a longer span in which to build his pyramid, and, as there was question as to who should instruct and lead the smaller but equally eager disciples, Winchester sacrificed his personal inclinations and returned to the city, to choke after the mountain air in a steam-heated office and to hold his aching head amid the city's noise. His living quarters, overlooking an old Square, were more to his taste: he had a fireplace there and, when he built up a log fire and sat in the dusk looking over the tree tops, he could half-imagine—save when an "L" train thundered across a nearby block—that he was anywhere except in the city he loathed.

Thus he was sitting and thus imagining, forgetting his dinner, when Molly Macquoid re-entered his life.

But it was not the same Molly: indeed, Ned imagined her one of the patrons of the portrait painter across the hall, in and out of whose studio flitted just such visions in costly furs. The dusk would account for her mistake, of which he rose to acquaint her. But Molly had taken too many chances and risks, had waited too long, to go through polite ceremonies such as his constrained rising presaged. She must put him at a disadvantage, immediately, and women know from childhood that this is done best by throwing themselves on men's mercy. A man welcomes violence from the woman he does not love: it gives him courage to be brutal, irrevocable. But how many miserable ones linger on in chains of pity, unable to refuse anything to those who give all and ask nothing! So before Ned could speak, Molly was in his arms, sobbing bitterly . . . collapsing. . . .

It was an unfair advantage to take. Besides making him feel responsible,

Molly intended he should know it was pleasant to hold her rounded body close, to feel her warm, vibrant cheeks against his own. He had never availed himself of previous manifest invitations, thus robbing her of her most effective weapon. So now she made no particular effort to be coherent, forcing him to draw out each word of an explanation punctuated liberally with tears of self-pity and interspersed with frequent iterations of her unconquerable love for him. She had tried to forget him after he went away; but it had driven her only to attempted suicide from which her mother had saved her by snatching the bottle. Then she realized how tragically absurd she had been: Ned might not *love* her; but he did not *hate* her. . . .

"Oh, my dear," said Ned in acute suffering. But she did not spare him, going on in abject humility. . . .

If she could get to the city, at least he would allow her to come to see him as she had done in the mountains; she had not bothered him, had she? (He held her tightly, hating himself.) But how to get away? She tried once, twice, both times was caught, after the last time confined to her room for weeks. Entered upon the scene one Willard Smith, a traveling salesman, who had loved her at sight and whom, shortly after, her mother thankfully permitted her to marry.

Yes, she had endured even that; but she knew the exigencies of Smith's occupation must bring her near to New York and to Ned. (He groaned, uttering under his breath oaths more awestricken than profane.) And, when they had come to Boston, she had left Smith and made straight for her goal. How she had wanted to come to him then! She had walked the old Square, irresolute, many times. But no! Ned had only enough for himself. Besides, no suspicion of mercenary motives must taint her great love. Again, what claim had she on Ned? What could *she* give her wonderful lover in exchange for the precious time she wasted? . . .

"Oh, *don't*, Molly," said Winchester in an agony of humiliation that she should so abase herself—which was what

she wanted. She was fighting for her own unscrupulously since fairly she could not win.

"Isn't it *so*?" she asked, her tone low and humble.

"No," he returned. "No: what have I to give *half* as precious as your devotion? *Nothing*."

"*Yourself—nothing?*" she asked, as one stricken at the indiscretion of a God.

He groaned again. So, she went on, he could see her any night in the show at the Folly Theater. She had waited until she was out of the chorus, until she had attained a part, but every night at this hour she had come by to see his study window light up and his dear shadow fall across the Square. If she might be allowed to come at that time any day—every day if he didn't mind—they could have dinner together there in the studio before she went to the theater. She wouldn't be a burden: she'd bring the *nicest things*. . . .

"Oh, my God, Molly!" He almost yelled. "*Don't, don't, don't!*"

Her eyes filled with tears. "You don't want me?"

"Want you! Yes, my God, yes! But don't say such things: *burden* and *bother*: I *want* you—" And then, being a gentleman, he lied: "As much as *you* want *me*."

And, really, he *did* want her. He had imagined the age had been passed for him when one woman could count much more than another; but such devotion from one so lovely had altered this opinion. Always attractive to women, winning them easily enough because of his indifference added to his knowledge of their fundamentals, plus an attractive personality and a positive style of speech despite his cadenced voice, he had yet of late seen too much of the intellectual type. Molly Macquoid came as a breath of mountain air. And she had made it so easy for him to take her: conscience could not interfere. She had left her parents married, and though she had left her husband, was there any way to persuade her to return to him? She was not in a position to demand that Ned prove his love by marriage, nor did she ask him to compromise the standing

of *Parnassus*—his first and only ideal love—by any alliance that, to malicious gossiping Philistines, could be called ugly names. After having decided that half a loaf was the most she could get, she had laid her plans, ruthlessly, that there be no slip in her getting that half. There was no way for Ned to refuse. Nor did he want to.

So, soon he was disappointed if she missed a day. She came always at the same hour: between six-thirty and seven; and he had always a table laid for two, and often he would wait until the time when he knew the assistant stage manager was calling "Overture" along the dressing-room halls, for, sometimes, she would come almost as late as this, snatch a hurried embrace, rain kisses, and fly back to her waiting taxicab. Almost inevitably she contributed costly luxuries—fruit out of season, salmon such as they caught back home, bar-le-duc guava—and somehow she learned what expensive foreign editions Winchester could not afford to buy and left a standing order with the foreign-publications clerk at Centavo's. No use for Ned to rail and threaten to pitch the things out of the windows: "I've got a right to do what I like with my money," Molly would submit defensively, "and if it gives me pleasure, it's none of your business."

She learned to be silent when she had nothing worth saying—a difficult feat rarely encountered in either woman or man; but in Ned's work and ambitions she had not the smallest interest, taking no trouble to acquaint herself with the reasons why those foreign books were precious. But unconsciously she absorbed his outlook upon life as a comedy, and, having done so, supplied him with marvelous material by recounting the egotisms and inanities of those celebrities with whom her stagework brought her in touch. Indeed, Ned's first stories to gain any wide appeal came from her—stage stories being, just then, in vogue—and enabled him to purchase for her some pretty bits of new art jewelry.

For Winchester, their arrangement was ideal. It gave him the necessary feminine touch to his life without which

he might have been apt to degenerate into the mere snuffy scholar; it did not interfere even slightly with the work to which he had devoted his life; it broadened the work by keeping him to practice and away from theory; and, by and by, as such things slowly shape themselves, fashionable women, ever on the outlook for new fads, began to discover the obscure shelves on which booksellers placed his books; and, with the eager air of Columboes, advertised their discovery, calling him all that he was not, "cynical," "blasé," an American Nietzsche. He declined their invitations to examine him, much to his publishers' disgust.

"Look here," said the publisher—the new sort, a gentleman, a scholar, yet a man of the world with a care for his tailor and haberdasher: "you've got the chance I've been waiting for, that I knew would come some day; and now you won't take advantage of it. What makes public opinion today? The Sunday supplements. And who makes the supplements? These smart women. Look how socialism and woman suffrage have been boomed since they went in for it. And now they've gone in for *you*: they'll boom you *too*."

"I never cared particularly about popularity or money, Sam," Ned replied.

"Damn popularity; damn money," his publisher said violently. "It's getting your stuff across that counts—educating the public up to an appreciation of what's really good. When we do, that means the end of dirty grafting politicians, cheap lying advertisements, Wall Street, and all the sores of American civilization. Isn't that what you're after?"

Winchester nodded.

"Well then, go to their kettle-drums, their pink teas, their house parties, their dinners; they'll make you fashionable. And when you're that, you can spit in the public's eye and it'll say 'Thank you.' The one thing the common people will copy is 'smartness.' The milliner in Keokuk, the manicurist at Curate's, the dressmaker in Sioux City, the store girls at Lacy's, and the

plumber's wife in Meridian, will all read your books, just as they'll wear some outrageous split skirt, if they hear Mrs. Van Punk and Miss De Cheese are doing it. And they'll hear it all right in the colored section of the Sunday yellows. They'll print ridiculous lies about you and illustrate them with pictures of Tony de Bastellane and André de la Foque. You'll have to stand sponsor for every wild theory under the sun, but they'll *make* you, just as they made the Fabian Giant and the Five Towns fellow, and the French philosopher with the German name. And, without deviating one inch from artistic ideas, you'll cram your wisdom down the public's throat and if they manage to digest one or two thoughts, why maybe next election they won't vote for Tammany and kindred spirits, won't read Cantilever's spring novel, won't call cubists crazy, won't refer to anyone with the ghost of an idea as a 'highbrow.' A half good novel in circulation is worth more than an all good one on the bookshelf. You can never see that, but at least you *do* see what an *all good* one in circulation is. So you've just got to accept every invitation a smart woman sends you. D'you hear?"

It was thus that Ned Winchester paid a visit to his publishers, tailor and haberdasher—each the smartest of their kind upon the Avenue—and the "intellectuals" in smart society had a new sensation, to wit: a tall, thin fellow, outwardly in no way to be distinguished from any other man of their acquaintance save for a longer stretch and width of forehead and deeper set of eyes, commenting casually upon their most cherished ideas as one who approves of toys for children and a belief in Santa Claus. There was no pose to Ned Winchester; his speech held no desperate striving after clever effects, no brummagem "wit" that lies in perverting proverbs and inverting epigrams, no double meaningstending toward the bedroom, no glorification of sexual appeal, no democratic belief in the wisdom or equality of the masses. His creed was simple. He believed the strong should protect, guide, and rule the weak; his motto was,

"Service is strength"; his contempt for those born strong who wasted their efforts in providing nobly for themselves was profound: "No strong man can use one-thousandth of what he can get if he is selfish, and the surplus breeds unhappiness for him, misery for those he took it from." Admiring the great Englishmen of literature, the great manly British institutions, he yet loathed Americans who endeavored to graft British snobbery and accent on our institutions. Reverent to the great German philosophers, he hated those who would try to adapt their socialistic teachings to a country made up mostly of raw material, hundreds of years removed from the European standard of thought and education.

He was a great social success, and his obscure books were republished in a new *format*, leather for the rich, boards for others, and advertised by department stores in complete sets like any classic.

V

His debut in society changed other lives than his own. Molly Macquoid was never sure of finding him home at dusk any more, for then it was that he was on his way to some Plaza or Murray Hill dinner. Nor was she able to go her way happily to rehearsals, shopping, and performances, secure in the knowledge that during the day his editorial duties claimed him, at night his writing. She considered again. Shaw has said that a clever woman prefers one-tenth of an exceptional man to all of a commonplace one. But Molly was clear-sighted, as are most women when it comes to the man they love, and she knew that these days Ned was meeting the best of womankind that America had to show, women as pretty as she, and, more than that, possessing some sort of sympathy for his work that she had not, plus a social position and sufficient money to surround his working hours with luxuries she could not give—a change of climate for every season, for instance, and a residence in many countries. She knew the chances were that she might cease

to possess even the one-tenth of Ned with which, hitherto, she had been content. He might marry one of those slender arrogant women whose pictures faced her own on the newspaper page opposite the players, more than occasionally rendering cheap their more flamboyant type of beauty and attire.

Considering, then, without egotism as before, she realized that there were too few really remarkable men in the world for Ned to escape many blandishments as bold as her own had been. But it would require time to sponge away the loyalty that her own devotion and gifts had inspired when he was (according to Molly's ideas) nobody. So she must act while she still had the advantage over this other superior type of women, unscrupulously advantage herself of his good nature, forge new letters of pity. In setting about her plans, she considered Charles Chisholm Cantilever's feelings less than she would have those of her lap dog; he had merely graduated from an annoyance to a convenience, and having ceased to serve in the latter capacity, she must rid herself of him.

She was, as I told you, married to Cantilever. It had been a result of her realization that, even did she manage to escape to New York, Winchester would send her back to her parents. He did not care for her sufficiently to incur for life the responsibility of her future; and of this Molly was well aware. More: she doubted even if he cared enough to permit her to visit him if he knew she was married to another man and living in her husband's house, so she had invented the story about the traveling salesman, secure in the fact that there was no one back there in the woods to whom Ned would write and that his path and Cantilever's lay in opposite directions in New York, so that there was little chance of their meeting. That chance she must take, but she had done her best to avoid any other chances. Thus she had refrained from visiting Winchester until it could be done regularly in absolute safety. One of the conditions under which she had married Cantilever had been his promise to put her on the stage, thus rendering her in-

dependent of him should ever the crash come. With the prestige of his popular name, he had easily secured her promotion from the chorus after a few months especially as Molly had endeared herself to the great Bob Ledyard, producer, by working overtime on eccentric dance steps and singing lessons; and her husband could please the artistic costume designer by paying for most expensive and dazzling frocks the designer dared not suggest to the management. So when given a simple part of the "Carmen" (visual) type, Molly had conquered the front-row Johns and the gallery boys by her bold beauty, her sensational tiger-skin costume that left her magnificent limbs half-exposed, the daring sensuousness of her glances and utter abandon of her body when (with a less spectacular but more experienced male partner who provided most of the terpsichorean skill) she was given the newest Barbary Coast "dip" dance; the fame of which soon carried her name to vaudeville magnates and to society dancers who imitated her at Tango teas and Canary cotillions. And, while the "Johns" down front eagerly discussed their chances of meeting her and sent messages on cards concealed in bouquets and, sometimes, inside soft untanned-leather cases from Griffony's, Charles Chisholm Cantilever sat, fatuously beaming, or lounged, proudly in the lobby and round the horseshoe-circle at the back, thinking himself admired and envied whereas her unceremonious treatment of him back stage led the performers to believe (for *they* never read *anything* but the trade-journals of the profession) that he was that contemptible thing, a stage-husband dependent upon his wife's pay.

But she ignored the "Johns," was blind to the charms of the leading-men and the comedians, and therefore rejoiced the heart of Cantilever. As a matter of fact, she was too busy—she wanted all the pretty and luxurious things that she had had since her marriage, but she wanted love, too, so she had set a certain salary as necessary before she could leave Cantilever, hence worked harder at her dancing and singing, rehearsed

almost daily new dances and, at six o'clock each day left Cantilever to a solitary dinner on the plea that she must practise just before performing and would eat in her dressing-room; hastening instead to Ned.

But, now that Ned's prospects had changed, that he was exposed to manifold temptations, leaving Cantilever was not enough. So she set her plan in operation.

She sent for her rival in the company, a girl who was, frankly, for sale—but only to high bidders, the pride of Sydenham's and other gilded restaurants, and the patron saint of taxi-drivers. To her, Molly explained what she wanted done, giving her a thick oil of bills and assuring her that, in the divorce complaint, the name of the co-respondent would be left blank. . . . And, thereafter, Cantilever when he came back stage seldom found himself allowed to enter his wife's dressing-room, for another girl now dressed there; while the siren whom Molly had paid seemed always hanging about in the wings or behind the backdrop, waiting for Cantilever's appearance and coaxing him into her dressing-room. . . . She was a creature of sinuous curves and these were more generously displayed in her "classic" costume (in which her arms, legs and feet were quite bare) than were Molly's in her tiger skin. Cantilever's was but the weakest of flesh, and, though he adored Molly, she was consistently cold to him. He did not love this glorious hot-blooded woman, but love was not necessary to gain Molly's ends. The night when her rival notified her of an appointment after the show, Molly did not come home to Cantilever. A few days later he was served with divorce papers—quietly, at great expense to Molly—for only the rich can escape newspaper notoriety in divorce suits—and, just as quietly, without Molly's stage name being chronicled at all, a referee heard the evidence and gave her an absolute divorce.

It was that same night she came to Ned after the show and refused to leave his apartment. She could no longer stand the separation, she said—the

thoughts of the other women whom he met daily. She had cared for him before he became famous, would care for him if he were a laborer. Hysterically she told him of her fears, how some fascinating woman would ensnare and ruin him. How could he go on with his work, entangled in social affairs, married to a woman who would interfere? If it were for his own good, she would not care for her poor little self; he might desert her and still she would love him. But had she not brought him luck? Why, the stories she had told him had been the first to be famous. . . . And if he married anyone else, she would kill herself. Why should he not marry her? Her husband was dead—she had had word long ago but had not told him because she was not afraid for him—*then*. Always altruistic. . . .

There was really no possibility of escape to one like Ned who believed the strong could protect the weak. Besides, it is not certain he wanted to escape at that time, although later he saw women who might have suited him better—as Molly had known he would; but, just then, he was full of tenderness for her. She occupied the only sentimental corner of his heart, and he had missed her greatly, and no other woman had made him forget the trysts in the dusk. No, there was no excuse he could give for not marrying her; and so, putting off the evil moment no longer—for her hysteria increased in the morning, they went to a little church nearby and were wed.

VI

CHARLES CHISHOLM CANTILEVER is past forty, now, and writes tragic tales in which good women, horrified at grosser men and not being able in their purity to understand those weak victims of physical appetites, turn from them in disgust and send to suicide the men who still worship them. He, himself, has considered every form of self-destruction, but somehow is still alive, and has gone back to the old Tenderloin life, writing his excuses for rights of puerile debauchery into his novels which,

the tame critics say, have "gained in breadth and in deep knowledge of the soul of humanity; depicting life, grim, relentless, tragic, with a master's hand and with intimate instinctive wisdom." But they do not sell as they once did. There are too many disciples of Winchester to parody them—the "young lions of journalism" as the tame critics contemptuously say. Cantilever never knew Molly had been other than one of those same angels of purity, culling him out of her clean sweet vision only because he was not worthy.

But Winchester knows, and is not sure whether to smile or be sad. For, granted her lover, Molly has been an exceptional wife. True, she never reads his books nor makes any effort to understand his philosophy, but she works hard at her work—from which, at his command, any semi-nudity or other sensuality has long been eliminated—and is as busy as a beaver at other times in making their homes beautiful. They have two homes: a New York studio while she performs, and the moated grange in the woods, once Cantilever's, but since sold to them. Winchester only writes now, having surrendered *Parnassus* to a trained disciple, and is scarcely ever at the studio. But he trusts Molly implicitly—she says, because he does not care enough, her one disappointment in life being that she cannot make him jealous. What was Cantilever's poison has been Winchester's nourishment.

Perhaps his life story is responsible for that section of his philosophy where he writes: "Nature always preserves the average: holding the balance with the nicest eye. So, if you be inclined to be jealous of the rich man, remember one whom he loves may, some day, make his life a tragedy: this, because, to be so rich, he had not the time to study human nature and to understand her. While she, on her part, may leave her rich husband, her many luxuries and her scented idleness, and, oblivious to the world's lure of gaiety and gaudery, devote herself unselfishly to promoting the happiness of some poor man who is poor because he has given up his life to an understanding and a love of his fellows.

So that any pleasure the rich man's wealth may give him may be equalized by the love he did not receive: any the poor man may have lost may be made up by some woman's unselfish devotion. . . . I think the analogy may be carried through the history of the world and it makes distinction between

good and evil difficult. What evildoer to one, may not be a benefactor to another? What if one be God's scourge, the other his wreath of bay or laurel? Who knows? Then who shall judge?"

So he has never reproached Molly for her literary creation, Willard Smith, the traveling salesman.



SERVANT GIRL AND GROCER'S BOY

By Joyce Kilmer

HER lips' remark was "Oh, you kid!"
Her soul spoke thus (I know it did):

"O king of realms of endless joy,
My own, my golden grocer's boy,

I am a princess forced to dwell
Within a lonely kitchen cell,

While you go dashing through the land
With loveliness on every hand.

Your whistle strikes my eager ears
Like music of the choiring spheres.

The mighty earth grows faint and reels
Beneath your thundering wagon wheels.

How keenly, perilously sweet
To cling upon that swaying seat!

How happy she who by your side
May share the splendors of that ride!

Ah, if you will not take my hand
And bear me off across the land,

Then, traveler from Arcady,
Remain awhile and comfort me.

What other maiden can you find
So young and delicate and kind?"

Her lips' remark was "Oh, you kid!"
Her soul spoke thus (I know it did).

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

LITANY: CANTO VI.

From "Lohengrin," and from dandruff; from dill pickles, and from the Salvation Army; from monograms on shirts, and from connoisseurs of beer; from secret memoirs of the courts of Europe, and from church bells; from the motion pictures of Dante's "Inferno," and from Dante's "Inferno"; from souvenir menus, and from rubber heels; from the post-Wagnerian theory of music, and from the practice of polishing one's fingernails on the table cloth; from lady pianists who play Meyerbeer, and from gentlemen pianists who play Chopin; from the theory that money will not buy everything, and from clothes—Good Lord deliver us!

1. It costs nothing to be polite.
2. It is worth nothing.

If x is the population of the United States and y is the degree of imbecility of the average American, then democracy is the theory that $x \times y$ is less than y .

YESTERDAY	TODAY
Ladies.	Women.
Petticoats.	
Wives.	Sweethearts.
Fallen Women.	White Slaves.
Sylvanus Stall.	Havelock Ellis.
9:30 P. M.	3:30 A. M.
"The Old Homestead."	"Damaged Goods."
Wagner.	Richard Strauss.
Twice.	Once.
Dishonesty.	Dishonesty.

He marries best who marries last.

The low, graceless humor of names! On my shelf of poetry, arranged by the alphabet, Coleridge and J. Gordon Cooglar are next-door neighbors! Mrs. Hemans is beside Laurence Hope! Walt Whitman rubs elbows with Ella Wheeler Wilcox; Robert Browning, with Richard Burton; Rossetti, with Cale Young Rice; Shelley, with Clinton Scollard; Wordsworth, with George E. Woodberry; John Keats, with Herbert Kaufman!

Ibsen, on the shelf of dramatists, is between Victor Hugo and Jerome K. Jerome. Sudermann follows Harriet Beecher Stowe. Maeterlinck shoulders Percy Mackaye. Shakespeare is beside Sutro and Sardou. Euripides and Clyde Fitch! Upton Sinclair and Sophocles! Æschylus and F. Anstey! D'Annunzio and Richard Harding Davis! Augustus Thomas and Tolstoi! Eugène Brieux and George Broadhurst!

More low alphabetical humor: Edwin Bjorkman and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson; Gerhart Hauptmann and Robert Hichens; Voltaire and Henry Van Dyke; Flaubert and John Fox, Jr.; Balzac and John Kendrick Bangs; Ostrovsky and James Oppenheim; Elinor Glyn and Théophile Gautier; Joseph Conrad and Robert W. Chambers; Zola and Zangwill!

And midway along my shelf of immortal novels, between George Moore and Frank Norris, there is just room enough for the two volumes of "Der-ringford," by Frank A. Munsey!

THE AMERICAN FLAG—A decoration for public dance halls, circus lemonade stands, sideshows, boxing arenas, barber poles, clam bakes and Daughters of the Revolution.

THE SANDOWS OF LOVE:

Jacob.
Abelard.
The husband of a lady embalmer.



COURTROOM—A place where Jesus Christ and Judas Iscariot would be equals.



GENTLEMAN—One who will not strike a woman—without provocation.



ADVICE to ardent young men: If you knew what she was thinking, you would be braver.



MARRIAGE—An unresolved dissonance.

DIVORCE—The return to the tonic.



HELL—A place where the Ten Commandments have a police force behind them.



SIGN to hang outside the parlor door on evenings of amour:

Don't Stop! Don't Look! Don't Listen!



IMPRESSIONS OF STATESMEN:

ROOSEVELT—"Onward, Christian Soldiers!" in a slaughterhouse . . . a sparring match at a mothers' meeting . . . Booker T. Washington playing Hamlet . . . a lion with false teeth.

TAFT—Washing on the line on a windy day . . . the village butt . . . a palm-house after a hailstorm.

BRYAN—Sam Jones saying mass at St. Peter's . . . three strikes, but not out . . . March 4, 1917.

HENRY CABOT LODGE—A shipwrecked sailor lashed to a sponge . . . a grammarian in a cabaret . . . the last quince of summer.

LADIES:

The Saleslady.
The Leading Lady.
The Landlady.
The Scarlet Lady.
Lady Barbers.
The Wash Lady.



AWAITING THE JUDGMENT DAY:

Bustles.
"Sweet Marie."
The Republican Party.
"Ta-ra-ra-ra Boom-de-ay."
Ping Pong.
The A. P. A.
The Emmanuel Movement.
Doc. Wiley.



ELEMENTS OF MODERN ROMANCE:

Dress Shields.
Corsets.
Suspenders.
Toupees.
Dandruff cures.
Talcum powder.
Patchouli.
Umbrellas.
Breath perfumers.
Policemen.
Chaperons.
Toothpicks.
Eugenics.
The Higher Education.



ASSUMING that the majority is right, the following immutable truths are hereby offered:

That thirteen is an unlucky number.
That one bath a week is sufficient.
That quinine will cure a cold.
That all women who smoke cigarettes are hussies.
That all Chinamen smoke opium.
That George Barr McCutcheon is a greater novelist than George Moore.
That Dr. Parkhurst is a great thinker.
That all rich men are felons.



SOME day, when at last I have obtained my divorce and ceased to toil, I am going to devote my leisure to a the-

saurus of the Stable Names of the Great. You know what a stable name is, of course. You know that a racing mare called Czarina Olga Fedorovna in the dope sheets is not Czarina Olga Fedorovna in the stable, nor even Czarina or Olga, but usually plain Lil or Jinnie. And you know, too, that a prize bulldog called Champion Zoroaster II on the bench is often plain Jack or Ponto in the kennel. So with the eminent of the genus homo. The official style and appellation of the late King Edward VII was Edward, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the Dominions Beyond the Seas, King, Emperor of India—but his wife called him Bertie. And the wife of Kaiser Wilhelm calls him Willie.

But what of even greater men? What was Ibsen's stable name? Did his wife call him Henrik, formally, harshly—or did she tone it down to Hen, Henny, Harry, Rik or Hank? And Bismarck? Did the Fürstin ever call him Ottchen? Or Ottily? Both favorites at the German hearth! And Tolstoi? By Russian custom he was Leo Nikalajevitch to his friends—but was he ever Lee or Nicky to the Countess? What was Grant to his wife? Certainly not Ulysses, an inhuman, impossible name! And Napoleon I? And Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart? And Honoré Balzac? And Robert Browning?

Was he ever Bob? And John Wesley? Was he ever Jack? And Emmanuel Swedenborg? Was he ever Manny?

Now and then we are permitted to penetrate the veil. For example, we are told by Huxley's son that his wife called him, not Thomas, nor even Tom, but Hal, an affectionate contraction of his mediate Henry. And we know from P. T. Barnum himself that his stable name was Taylor. Also, we know that Nietzsche was Fritz to his sister, that Edgar Allan Poe was Eddie to his wife, that Shakespeare was Will on the Bankside, that Mark Twain was always Youth at home, that Whistler was Jimmie, that Disraeli was Dizzy.

But what of Rutherford B. Hayes? Rudyard Kipling? Gabriele D'Annunzio? Ludwig van Beethoven? Cardinal Armand Duplessis Richelieu? Eschenbach von Wolfram? Vasili Verestchagin? Diego de Silva y Velasquez? Tadeusz Kosciuszko? Alessandro Cagliostro? Cipriano Castro? Helmuth von Moltke?

It is this fair field that I propose to explore. So far, no roving psychologist has ever entered it. The facts I seek are scattered, curious, often deliberately concealed. But I shall track them down and bring them to the light of day. There will be more of human nature in my slim thesaurus than in all the novels ever written.



ENOUGH

By Sara Teasdale

IT is enough for me by day
To walk the same bright earth with him,
Enough that over us by night
The same great roof of stars is dim.

I have no care to bind the wind,
Or set a fetter on the sea:
It is enough to feel his love
Blow by like music over me.

THE RUNAWAY HANDKERCHIEF

By Richard Le Gallienne

WERE I to attempt to describe her handkerchief, small as it is, I should have to write the largest book in the world.

I came into possession of the handkerchief in a somewhat picturesque, and certainly unexpected, way. It was a windy April day on Fifth Avenue, and every woman seemed beautiful. Yet my heart was too sad for my eyes to dare look on the faces of beautiful women. I was walking along, with my head bent down, with very little more thought than how to keep my hat from flying away to the moon, when suddenly I heard a murmur of men's voices behind me, like the roar of a mob. Indifferently I turned, and saw many gentlemen running, running after a little fluttering thing that raced along the pavement like a petal of some wonderful flower, or like a butterfly that beats the collector.

Suddenly the little fluttering thing flitted by my feet, and I stretched out my hand to seize it—but, at that great and everlasting moment, a wonderful lady stretched out her hand also, and I looked for an immortal instant into her eyes, and for that instant I held the handkerchief. Then, of course, I gave it into her keeping and went on my way, wondering about the color of her eyes, and if any painter or poet in the world could say just what that color was. I walked on dreaming, too, of her hair. Behind me I heard afar the murmur of the men who had not held that perfumed thing in their hands; and, of course, I never forgot, and through many dreary days and weeks the thought of that little handkerchief went on sweetening the bitterness of a lonely life.

Could I ever forget how at the mo-

ment when she had taken it from my hand, laughing so softly, that windy day, she had said: "It is a runaway handkerchief, isn't it?"

Her face was ever with me, all the day and all the night, but I had no hope that I should ever see it again save with the eyes of my soul. But the memory of it I locked up in a sanctuary where no one prays but me, and sometimes I would take it with me on an old boat of mine with white sails, alone with it and the wind and the sea. Yet neither wind nor sea could bring any comfort, and as I docked my boat many a night under the moon, in a little ugly creek, all still with long grasses, the green quiet things that give peace to the hurrying human heart, all I had for consolation—but think of consolation so wonderful!—was not the sound of the sea or the wind—it was the sound of that sweeter voice that had once said: "It is a runaway handkerchief, isn't it?"

One morning, just as I was raising my sail, and looking at the sea, there came a sudden messenger, with a letter in his hand—and in the letter was one wonderfully written word, "Wait."

"I will wait forever," I wrote in return, and the messenger went; and after a little while, hidden with all the veils of the dawn, a lady stepped into my little boat, and I hoisted sail, and the fair wind too: us out upon the wide waters. And there was a great silence—a silence I dared not break. Was it not enough to sail the boat that held the strangest eyes in all the world? Yet out of the silence there came the sweetest voice since the morning stars sang together, and it said: "I only wanted to bring back your handkerchief."

THE DEAD ARE SILENT

By Arthur Schnitzler

HE could not bear sitting in the carriage any longer; he got out and walked up and down. It was already dark; the few street lamps in this quiet side street flickered in the wind. It had stopped raining, and the sidewalks were almost dry; but the streets were still wet, and here and there a puddle had formed.

It's strange, thought Franz, how here, but a hundred feet away from the Praterstrasse, one can imagine oneself in a little Hungarian town. In any case, it was safe here; for in this street she would not be liable to meet any of her acquaintances.

He looked at his watch. Seven o'clock, and night had fallen already. An early autumn this year! And the cursed rain!

He pulled up his collar and walked up and down more quickly. The panes in the street lamps rattled. "A half-hour more," he murmured to himself, "and if she's not here then, I can go. Ah, I almost wish that that half-hour were up." He remained standing at the corner; for here he had a commanding view of the two streets, on either of which she might come.

Yes, today she'll come, he thought, as he held on to his hat, which threatened to blow away. Friday—Faculty meeting—then she'll dare come, and will even stay longer. He heard the ringing of the horse cars; and now the church bells began to ring. The street became more lively. More people passed and it seemed to him that they were mostly shopgirls and clerks. All of them walked quickly, and seemed to be fighting the storm. No one paid any attention to him; only two shopgirls gazed curiously up at him. Suddenly he saw a familiar

figure hurrying toward him. He went quickly to meet her. Not in a carriage? Was it she?

It was; and as she became aware of him, she walked more slowly.

"You come on foot?" he asked.

"I discharged my carriage before we reached this street, because I think I've had the same coachman before."

A man walked past and gave her a cursory glance. The young man stared at him, almost threateningly. He hurried on. The woman followed him with her eyes.

"Who was it?" she asked, frightened.

"I don't know him. You'll meet none of your acquaintances here, so you can rest easy. But come more quickly, and get into the carriage."

"Is it yours?"

"Yes."

"Is it open?"

"An hour ago the weather was ideal."

They hurried to the waiting carriage, and got in.

"Driver!" called the young man.

"Where has he gone to?" the young woman asked.

Franz looked all about. "It's unbelievable," he cried, "I don't see the fellow anywhere."

"For heaven's sake!" she cried softly.

"Wait a minute, dear; he must be here."

He opened the door of the little inn; the driver was sitting at a table with some other people. Now he rose quickly.

"Right here, sir!" he cried, and finished his glass of grog standing up.

"What in the deuce has got into you, to keep us waiting like this?"

"Excuse me, sir. But I'm right with ye now."

Swaying a little from side to side, he hurried to the carriage.

"Where d'ye want to drive, sir?"

"The Prater!"

The young man got in. His companion lay huddled up in the corner.

Franz took both of her hands in his. She remained immobile. "Well, won't you at least say good evening to me?"

"Please let me alone for just a few moments. I'm still quite out of breath."

He leaned back in his corner. Both were silent for a while. The carriage had turned into the Praterstrasse, had passed the Tegethoff Monument, and in a few seconds was flying down the dark Praterallee. Suddenly Emma threw her arms about her lover. He quickly raised the veil that separated her lips from his, and kissed her.

"At last I'm with you!" she said.

"Do you know how long it has been since we have seen one another?" he asked.

"Since Sunday."

"Yes, and then only from afar."

"Why, what do you mean? You were at our house."

"Well, yes—at your house. But this can't go on. I'm never going to your house again. But what's the matter with you?"

"A carriage just passed by."

"Dear child, the people who are driving in the Prater today aren't really going to bother about us."

"That I believe. But one of our friends might see us."

"That's impossible. It's too dark to recognize anyone."

"Please let us drive somewhere else."

"As you wish."

He called to the driver, but the latter did not seem to hear. Then he leaned forward and touched him with his hand. The coachman turned around.

"You're to turn back. . . . And why are you whipping your horses like that? We're in no hurry, do you hear! Drive to the—you know, the street that leads to the Reichs bridge."

"Yes, sir."

"And don't go driving like mad. There's no sense in that."

"Excuse me, sir, but it's the weather that makes them horses go so wild."

They turned back.

"Why didn't I see you yesterday?" she suddenly asked.

"How could you?"

"Why, I thought that my sister had invited you also."

"She did."

"And why didn't you come?"

"Because I cannot bear to be with you when others are around. No, never again!"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Where are we?" she then asked.

They were driving under the railroad bridge into the Reichsstrasse.

"That's the road to the Danube," said Franz. "We're on the way to the Reichs bridge. You'll meet none of your friends here," he added in a jesting tone.

"The carriage is swaying terribly."

"That's because we're driving over cobble stones."

"But why does he drive in such zig-zags?"

"You think he does!"

But he himself thought that they were being tossed about much more violently than was necessary. He did not, however, want to alarm her.

"I have some serious things to talk to you about today, Emma."

"Then you'll have to begin right away, because I have to be home by nine o'clock."

"All can be settled in two words."

"My God, what's that?" she suddenly cried. The carriage had been running in the car tracks, and now, as the coachman was trying to get out, it hung for a moment at such an angle that it almost overturned. Franz seized the driver by his cloak, and cried: "Will you stop! Why, you're drunk!"

With effort the horses were brought to a standstill.

"But, sir—"

"Come, Emma, let us get out here."

"Where are we?"

"At the bridge already. It's not so stormy now, so let us walk a bit. We can't really talk in a carriage."

Emma lowered her veil and followed.

"You don't call this stormy!" she exclaimed, as a gust of wind whirled about her.

He took her arm. "Follow us," he called to the driver.

They walked on ahead. When they heard the water rushing below them, they stopped. It was pitch dark. The broad river looked like a boundless expanse of gray. In the distance they saw red lights, which appeared to sway over the river and reflect themselves on its bosom. The lights on the bank which they had just left seemed to be dissolving themselves into the water. Now faint thunder, which came nearer and nearer, was audible. Both looked at the spot where the red lights shone. Trains with lighted windows came out of the night and disappeared again. The thunder gradually subsided, and, except for an occasional gust of wind, quiet reigned.

After a long silence, Franz said: "We ought to go away."

"Of course," Emma answered softly.

"We ought to go away," Franz repeated with animation. "I mean far away."

"It can't be done."

"Because we're cowards. That's why it can't be done."

"And my child?"

"I'm positive that he'd let you take him."

"And how shall we do it?" she asked softly. "Steal away in the dead of night?"

"No, certainly not. All you have to do is simply tell him that you can't live with him any longer because you belong to another."

"Are you out of your mind, Franz?"

"If you prefer, I'll spare you that, too. I'll tell him myself."

"You'll not do that, Franz."

He tried to see her face, but all he noticed was that she had lifted her head and had turned it toward him.

He was silent for a while. Then he said quietly: "Don't be afraid. I'll not do it."

They were now approaching the other shore.

"Don't you hear something?" she asked. "What is it?"

"It comes from over there."

Slowly it came from out of the night, a small red light. Soon they saw it shone from a lantern tied to the front part of a peasant's cart. But they could not see whether anyone was in the wagon. Right in back of it lumbered two other carts. On the last they made out a man in peasant's dress, who was lighting his pipe. The wagons drove by. Then they heard nothing but the slow movement of the carriage, which kept about twenty paces ahead of them. Now the bridge gradually sank to the level of the other shore. They saw how the street ran on, between rows of trees, into the night. On both sides of them lay meadows, which looked like deep abysses.

After a long silence Franz suddenly said: "Well, this is the last time."

"What?" asked Emma in a worried tone.

"That we'll be together. Stay with him. I'll say good-bye to you."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Absolutely."

"Now you see that it is always you who spoil the few hours we spend together, and not I."

"Yes, yes; you're right," said Franz. "Come, let's drive back."

She held his arm more firmly. "No," she said tenderly, "not now. I'm not going to let you send me away like that."

She drew him down toward her and kissed him. "If we kept right on this road where should we get to?"

"Prague, my dear."

"Well, we won't go that far," she replied, smiling. "But let's go on a bit further, if you don't mind."

"Hey, driver!" called Franz.

The carriage rolled on. Franz ran after it. Now he saw that the driver had fallen asleep. By calling loudly enough, Franz finally succeeded in waking him.

"We're going to drive a little further along this straight road. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir; all right, sir."

They stepped in; the coachman whipped up the horses, and they raced

down the muddy road. The couple in the carriage were folded in each other's arms while they were tossed from one side to the other.

"Now isn't this really very nice?" Emma whispered, with her lips almost touching his.

At this moment it seemed to her as if the carriage had shot up into the air. She felt herself hurled out; she tried to seize hold of something, and only clawed in the air. It seemed to her that she spun round and round in a circle at such a speed that she must close her eyes. Then she felt herself lying on the ground, and a terrible heavy quiet hung over her, as if she were all alone, far away from the world. Presently she heard noises: horses' hoofs pawing the ground near her, and a soft whinnying; but she could see nothing. A terrible fear gripped her; she cried out, and her fear became greater, for she could not hear her own voice. All of a sudden, she knew exactly what had happened: the carriage had hit something, probably a milestone, had overturned, and they had been thrown out. Where was Franz? She called his name. And she heard her voice—very vaguely—but she heard it. There was no answer. She tried to rise. She was able to sit up, and as she put forth her two hands she felt a human body next to her. And now, as her eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, she could see more clearly. Franz lay on the ground, motionless. She touched his face with her hand, and felt something warm and damp flowing over it. She caught her breath. Blood! Franz was wounded and unconscious. And the driver—where was he? She called to him. No answer. She was still sitting on the ground. Nothing had happened to her, she thought, although she felt pains in all parts of her body.

"Franz!" she called.

A voice close by answered:

"Where are ye, miss? And where's the gentleman? Nothing's happened, has it? Wait a minute, miss; I'll light one of the lamps so as we can see better. I don't know what's got into them horses today. It ain't my fault, as true's I'm living."

Emma had risen by this time in spite of her pains, and she was relieved to find that the coachman was not injured. She heard him open the lamp and strike a match. In terrible fear she waited for the light. She did not dare touch Franz again, who lay stretched out on the earth.

A ray of light came from the side. She saw the carriage, which, to her surprise, was not quite overturned, but was lying up against the main drain, as if one of the wheels had come off. The horses were standing stock still. The light came nearer; she watched it as it crept over a milestone, over the stone heap, then on Franz's feet, on his body and, finally, on his face, where it remained. The driver had placed the lamp on the ground beside Franz's head. Emma knelt down, and when she saw his face, it seemed as if her heart stopped beating. His face was pale; his eyes were half open, and only the whites were visible. From the right temple trickled a small stream of blood, which, passing over the cheek, lost itself under the collar. His teeth had bitten into his lower lip.

"It isn't possible!" Emma murmured to herself.

The coachman was also on his knees, staring at the face. Then he took hold of the head with both of his hands and raised it.

"What are you doing?" screamed Emma, and recoiled from the head, which seemed to rise of its own accord.

"It looks to me, miss, like an awful accident."

"It isn't true," said Emma. "It can't be true. Did anything happen to you? And me—"

The driver slowly lowered the head of the unconscious man into Emma's lap. She trembled.

"If only somebody'd come . . . if only them peasants had come a quarter of an hour ago—"

"What shall we do?" Emma asked, her lips trembling.

"Yes, miss, if that there carriage only weren't broken— But now we've simply got to wait till someone comes."

He went on talking, but Emma was

not listening. She regained control of her thoughts, and knew how to act.

"How far is it to the nearest house?" she asked.

"Not far, miss. We're almost in Franz Josefsland. We'd see the houses if it was light. It's only about five minutes away."

"Well, you go and get help. I'll stay here."

"Yes, miss. But I think it'd be better if I stayed here with you. It won't be long 'fore somebody is sure to turn up."

"Then it may be too late. We need a doctor."

The driver looked at the face of the motionless man; then he looked at Emma, shaking his head.

"That you can't know," cried Emma, "nor I either."

"Yes, miss . . . but where'll I find a doctor in Franz Josefsland?"

"From there someone can go to the city, and—"

"D'y'e know what, miss: they've probably got telephones there, and I could call an ambulance."

"Yes, that's the best thing to do. But hurry up, for heaven's sake! And bring help and please go now this minute. Why, what are you doing?"

The driver was looking at the pale face in Emma's lap.

"Ambulance—doctor! It's too late for them to do any good!"

"Oh, please go now! For God's sake, go!"

"I'll go all right. Only, don't get scared here in the dark, miss."

He hurried off down the street and Emma was alone with the inanimate body in the dark street.

It wasn't possible—that thought kept going through her head. Of a sudden she seemed to feel someone breathing right next to her. She leaned over, and looked at the white lips. No, there was no breath coming from them. The blood on the temple and the cheek had dried. She looked at the eyes, and trembled. This was death! There was a dead man on her lap! And with shaking hands she raised the head and placed it on the ground. A terrible feeling of abandonment came over her.

Why had she sent the driver away? How foolish of her! What should she do here on the highroad with a corpse? If anyone should come along. . . . What would she do if any people came along? She looked at the dead man again. The light of the lamp seemed to her kind and friendly, for which she ought to be thankful. She gazed at it so long that her eyes blinked, and everything began to dance before her. Suddenly she had the sensation of being awakened. She jumped up! She couldn't be found here with him! What was she waiting for?

Voices were now audible in the distance.

"Already?" she thought. She listened, fearfully. The voices came from the direction of the bridge. Those could not be the people whom the coachman had gone to get. But whoever they were, they would certainly notice the light—and that could not be, for then she would be discovered.

She kicked the lamp over. The light was extinguished. Now she was in total darkness. She did not see him any more. The voices came nearer. Only the white stone heap was visible now. She now began to tremble in her whole body. Not to be discovered there—that was the important thing! She was lost if anyone found out that she had had a liaison . . . But the people passed on. . . . And now . . . She would have to go to the police station, and everybody would find it out—and her husband—and her child!

Then she realized that she had been standing as if rooted to the ground, that she could go away, that by staying she would only bring unhappiness upon herself. She took a step. Soon she was in the middle of the street. She looked ahead and saw the outlines of the long, gray road. There—there was the city. She could not see it, but she knew the direction. Once more she turned around. She could see the horses and the carriage; and when she tried very hard, she could make out something that looked like the outline of a human body, stretched out on the ground. . . . With all her might she tore herself away. The ground was wet, and the mud had sucked

in her shoes. She walked faster . . . she ran back—into the light, the noise and the people! The street seemed to run toward her, and she held up her skirt in order to keep from falling. The wind was at her back, and it seemed to be driving her ahead. She remembered that she was fleeing from living people who must now be at the spot, and also looking for her. What would they think? But no one could possibly guess who the woman was with the man in the carriage. The driver did not know her, and he would never be able to recognize her if he saw her. It was very wise that she did not stay; and it was not wrong of her to have left. Franz himself would have said that she was in the right.

She hurried toward the city, whose lights she saw under the railroad bridge at the end of the street. Just this one lonely street and then she would be safe. She heard a shrill whistling in the distance; growing shriller, drawing nearer. A wagon flew past. Involuntarily she stopped and watched it. It was the ambulance, and she knew its destination. "How quick!" she thought. It was like magic. . . . For a moment she had the most terrible feeling of shame she had ever experienced. She knew that she had been cowardly. But as the whistling grew fainter, a wild joy seized her, and she rushed on. People came toward her; she was not afraid of them any more—the worst was over. The noise of the city became more audible, and there was more light; already she saw the rows of houses on the Praterstrasse, and it seemed to her as if she were being expected there by a crowd of people in which she could disappear without leaving a trace behind her. As she came under a street lamp she was calm enough to look at her watch. It was ten minutes of nine. It seemed to her as if she were entirely forgiven, as if none of the blame had been hers. She was a woman—and she had a child and a husband. She had done right: it was her duty. Had she stayed she would have been discovered. And the newspapers! She would have been ostracized forever! . . . There was the Tegethoff Monument where many streets meet. There were

very few people abroad, but to her it seemed as if the whole life of the city were whirling about her. She had time. She knew that her husband would not be home till nearly ten—she even had time to change her clothes! She looked at her dress: it was covered with mud. What would she tell her maid? It went through her head that a full account of the accident would be in all the morning papers. And it would tell of the woman who was in the carriage at the time of the accident, and then could not be found. These thoughts made her tremble again—an imprudent thing, and all her cowardice had been for nought. But she had her key with her; she need not ring the bell. She would be quiet and no one would hear her. She got hurriedly into a carriage. She was about to give the coachman her address, when she thought that that would be unwise, and she gave him the name of the first street that came into her head. She had but one wish: to be safe at home. Nothing else made any difference. She was not heartless. Yet she was sure that days would come when she would doubt, and perhaps that doubt would ruin her; but now her only desire was to be at home, dry-eyed, at the table with her husband and child. The carriage was driving through the inner city. She stopped in a side street off the Ring, got out of the carriage, hurried round the corner, got into another carriage, and gave her right address to the driver. She was incapable of even thinking any more. She closed her eyes, and the carriage began to shake. She was afraid of being thrown out as before, and screamed. Then the carriage came to a stop in front of her home. She hurriedly got out, and quickly, with soft steps, passed the porter's window so that she would not be noticed. She ran up the stairs, softly opened the door . . . through the hall into her bedroom—it was done! She turned on the light, tore off her clothes and hid them in a closet. They would dry overnight—tomorrow she would brush them herself. Then she washed her hands and face, and put on a dressing gown.

Then the doorbell rang. She heard

the maid going to the door. She heard her husband's voice, and she heard his cane rattle in the umbrella jar. She felt that she must be strong or all would have been in vain. She hurried into the dining room so that she entered at the same moment that her husband did.

"You're at home already?" he asked.

"Surely," she answered. "I've been here quite a while."

"The maid didn't see you come in." She smiled without trying. But it tired her to smile. He kissed her on the brow.

Their little boy was already at the table. He had had to wait long and had fallen asleep. His book was on the plate, and his face rested on the open book. She sat down next to him, her husband opposite. He picked up a newspaper and glanced through it, then put it down and said:

"The others are still at the meeting, discussing things."

"What?" she asked.

And he started to tell her of the meeting. Emma pretended that she was listening, and kept nodding her head.

But she heard nothing; she did not know what he was speaking about. She felt as one who had wonderfully escaped from some terrible danger. As her husband talked, she moved her chair nearer to her son, and pressed his head against her breast. A feeling of great weariness crept over her. She could not control herself; she felt that sleep was overpowering her, and she closed her eyes.

Suddenly a thought flashed through her mind that had not occurred to her since she picked herself up out of the ditch. If he were not dead after all! If he should say to the doctors, "There was a woman with me, and she must have been thrown out also." What then?

"What is the matter?" asked the professor earnestly, as he looked up.

"Why . . . why—the matter!"

"Yes, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing!" She pressed her boy close to her breast.

The professor looked at her for a long while, silently.

"Do you know that you began to doze, and suddenly cried out?"

" . . . Really?"

"Yes, as if you had had a bad dream. Were you dreaming?"

"I really don't know. . . ."

She saw her image in the mirror, smiling horribly. Her face was all drawn. She knew that it was herself, but she shrank away from it. Her face had become fixed and she could not move her mouth. She tried to cry out. Then she felt two hands on her shoulders, and she noticed that the face of her husband had come between her and the mirror; his eyes, questioning, threatening, sank into hers. She knew that if she did not stand this last test, all was lost. She felt that she was regaining her strength; she had entire control of herself, and she knew that she must make use of this valuable moment. She took her husband's arms from her shoulders, drew him toward her, and gazed at him, gaily and tenderly.

As she felt her husband's lips on her brow she thought: "Surely . . . a bad dream. He must be dead . . . and the dead are silent."

"Why did you say that?" she suddenly heard her husband ask.

"What did I say?" And it seemed to her as if she had told the whole story aloud, and once more she asked, as she faltered under his stern gaze:

"What did I say?"

"The dead are silent," he repeated, very slowly.

"Yes . . ." she said. "Yes . . ." But she read in his eyes that she could not hide anything more from him.

They gazed at each other for a long time.

"Put the boy to bed," he said to her. "I think you have something more to tell me."

"Yes," she answered.

She knew that in a few minutes she was going to tell this man, whom she had deceived for years, the whole truth.

And, as she slowly went out through the door with her son and felt her husband's eyes upon her, a feeling of quiet stole over her, as if everything was going to be put to rights again. . . .

THANKS

By Louis Untermeyer

THANK God for this bright frailty of Life,
The lyric briefness of its reckless Spring;
Thank God for all the swift adventuring,
The bold uncertainty, the strengthening strife.

Thank God the world is set to such a tune,
That Life is such a proud and crashing wave;
That none but lifeless things shall be Time's slave,
Like the long-dead but never tiring moon;

That godlike Passion strangely leaps and runs;
That Youth cannot grow old nor Beauty stale;
That even Death is fragile, and must fail
Before the winds of joy that speed the suns.



SONG

By John Hall Wheelock

THE morning star is twinkling
Through rifted clouds withdrawn
A single, flaming taper
In the bridal chamber of dawn.

Faint are the floors with flowers
And trodden blooms of day.
One by one night's candles
Have flickered and died away.

No sound disturbs the quiet.—
Silence forevermore.—
Drawn are the twilit curtains,
Barred is the golden door.

SCORE ONE FOR THE DEVIL

By Paul Choiseul

AT ten o'clock the extraordinarily large and expectantly buzzing crowd on the Touraine station platform saw Old Ben driving the 'bus up the red hill with a professional animation designed to create the illusion among the commercial travelers inside that he verily believed the ten five would be on time. The waiting citizenry also discerned, emerging gradually from the settling cloud of gilding dust behind the 'bus, the incongruous team of Lalaunay the infidel. The biggest and tamest stallion in Upper Louisiana, paired with a little Spanish black mule, drew the grass-green wagon up the hill to one of the many oak trees that surround the station. Lalaunay tied Siroc, the flea-bitten gray stallion, to a hanging limb, and approached the gathering at the station, which went instantly quiet, like a henyard at the sinister shadow of a hated hawk.

But this was only one of a hundred usual ways the dominant group had of penalizing a transgressor of any of its unwritten laws; and since Lalaunay paid no more attention to it than to any of the other attempts at punishment, the ladies set in talking again, thus ignoring him, another phase of the tribal taboo.

The old man—for he was old, though his scrupulously clean-shaven face and his deliberate, vigorous manner gave the impression of middle age—proceeded directly to the baggage truck which stands on the black cinder walk, and which supports Touraine's slovenly quota to that tremendous though scattered army of town and village train-gazers. With these potential pariahs he entered into conversation with an ap-

parent ease and satisfaction nothing short of disgraceful.

There is no person freer with railway information than a train-gazer; and Lalaunay was immediately informed that the ceremonial gathering at the station was due to the fact that a carload of orphaned babies from the East, consigned to Texas and Louisiana, were attached to the ten five, and that two were known to be billed to Touraine.

The two leading families, the Pothergills and Joneses, that were to import babies, and from New York at that if you please, divided the attention of the assembled feminine representatives of the slightly less than leading families with the blackboard on which was written in white chalk the ever changing fables concerning the arrival of trains. The Touraine citizenry bears against the railroad an ancient grudge which is fed the fatter the later the trains are. For once, a long time ago, Touraine was the metropolis of Northwestern Louisiana and Northeastern Texas, by virtue of the steamboats that maneuvered up the winding rivers and bayous from New Orleans. Then the railroad came through, scattered Touraine's business among ten or twelve new towns, bought up and discontinued the dear steamboats, and so reduced the proud and haughty river city of twenty thousand to a peevish railroad town of three thousand. Therefore, when it was noticed that the ten five was already thirty minutes late, the low buzzing conversation changed to a laughing chatter, which was progressing rapidly toward a wild and desperate abandon of gaiety when the locomotive screeched in tremulous defiance down behind the graveyard.

The baby car was at the rear end of the train. The crowd stampeded down to it. There, on the forward platform, were three nurses, each in charge of an exiled New Yorker. Two of the exiles were properly infants, held in arms and of indeterminate sex to the casual eye, but one was a luminous-eyed little Italian boy, already showing a noble nose, five or six or seven years old. The representatives of the two leading families pressed forward, holding up their hands, their eyes on the undoubted boy, though they had ordered infants. The baby car manager read the bill of lading on the young Italian and shouted out:

"Jean Marie Lalaunay!"

The old man cut his way through the gasping crowd, his brown eyes burning fitful lights, his clean-shaven mouth pulled down hard at the corners; held up his hands and received the young exile; and staggered a little as the boy circled his arms, with instant warm approval, around his wrinkled, dew-lapped neck. The manager shouted the names of Fothergill and Jones four or five times before he could get any answer. Their babies were sullenly received and taken away with no notice whatever; for the astounded and shocked populace, including even the train-gazers, were watching Lalaunay the infidel, who had started for his wagon.

"Poor little boy!" he heard. "Isn't it a shame?" His back was to them, but there was in his step an aggravating jauntiness. Setting the young Italian on the high spring seat, he untied Siroc, jumped in the wagon, and, with his right arm around his bewildered but intensely curious charge, drove off down the road that goes out through the edge of Touraine to join the main road to Nopelousas.

The houses became more scattering and smaller, then appeared the stretch of pine woods on the Touraine side of Black Cypress Bayou and the wagon rolled down the gentle, sandyland hill, past the two-mile board, over the loose-jointed wooden bridge and just then Lalaunay yelled with brisk good humor, "Whoa." He was at home. The unpainted, weather-blackened, three-room

house that sat on the bayou's north bank, its small front porch looking down on the water not twenty feet away, was his dwelling. The thirty acres that reached away behind the house were his farm.

After the midday meal, cooked by himself, he conducted the happy exile out on the front porch overlooking Black Cypress. They sat on the steps, and Lalaunay compared the issue of the magazine in which he had seen the boy's picture and description with the card tied on his waist. Both said he was seven years and six months old, though he seemed extremely small for that age in the eyes of the importer, who admitted to himself, however, that he knew little about sizes and ages and boys. He had never married, and if chance had not thrown out of the window of a passing Pullman car, near a road crossing, that issue of the magazine in which the boy's picture had appeared he would never have thought of writing for him.

All the documents in the case of the exile said that he was Pasquale Giannetti. After smoking a while, and looking down at him from time to time, Lalaunay the infidel said judicially:

"Lil boy, you hare Robert Voltaire Lalaunay."

"Gwan—I'm 'Quale Giannetti," stated the boy without heat, merely correcting an error. He hadn't much time for talking, anyway; he was watching with suspensive interest the dark surface of the bayou where dramatic things were happening. The old man took three or four draws from his pipe.

"We play lak you hare Robert Voltaire Lalaunay," he whispered craftily, bending over.

"Sure," whispered back the boy, who leaped to his feet as he saw a catfish shoot up from the bosom of Black Cypress, fall back upon it and disappear again, an assemblage of bubbles showing where he had flashed into view.

"What's that?" asked Robert V., as Lalaunay the infidel called him ever afterward, even when lost beyond recall, in memory of Robert G. Ingersoll and Jean Marie Arouet de Voltaire, the two men he revered as corroborators of his

beliefs and loved as providers of arguments with which to shock Christians. With the explanation of the catfish began his series of expository lectures on farm and forest and water objects about which Robert V. asked from day to day. One of the earliest lectures was on the blue jaybird, which Lalaunay held in high esteem; he declared that every Friday the jaybirds disappear from the woods and fly down to hell, each of them carrying a grain of sand in his bill with which to help fill it up and so put out the fires. Hence no jaybird should be killed except on Friday; but on that day any found on earth might be dealt with as one faithless to a noble work. He hinted that there was a more detailed story which he would tell later.

On the following Saturday there arose the first real problem connected with the presence of Robert V., for on these afternoons Lalaunay had always shaved his long, hard, brown face scrupulously clean and gone to a dingy pool and billiard room in Touraine, where he played until nine or ten o'clock at night, excepting intervals for eating and drinking. For on Saturdays, you know, the Grand Cane Saloon has, in addition to the regular cheese and crackers, free turtle soup.

Old Lalaunay the infidel not only liked the games for themselves; he also delighted in showing himself in Touraine at least once a week, that he might remind the citizenry of the flouting of one of their dearest unwritten laws by a man beyond the reach of the tribal taboo. One of the unwritten laws of Touraine, as well as of many another small town, is that no person shall declare openly a disbelief in the Christian Church and the Bible. It is not required that all be Christians; indeed the majority in Touraine are not professed Christians. But every adult person, if he speaks at all on the subject—and few can escape going on record at some time—must profess a full and cordial belief in the Bible “from civer to civer.”

On this Saturday, however, he ceased stropping the razor a dozen times to ask himself what he would do with Robert V. while he was at the Grand Cane

Saloon. In the end he took him along. The moment they entered the long room behind the Grand Cane bar where the pool and billiard tables sit, Lalaunay was newly and keenly conscious of the dinginess and dirtiness of the place. The idle drifters that lolled on the elevated benches set against the wall attracted his particular attention, and unpleasantly. The thick, stale tobacco smoke that hung everywhere in the moist air; the heavy odor of lemon peels, beer, whiskey and unclean cuspidors that drifted out of the barroom, all smashed at the fierce old man's sensibilities. He noted minutely, and with surprise, the stream of vile and vulgar language out in the saloon in front, where the customary large Saturday afternoon crowd had gathered.

Losing the first game of pool and paying his score, Lalaunay hurried out and down to the wagon yard, where he had put up Siroc and the black mule. Attending to the little real business he had in town, he drove out to Black Cypress, arriving at five o'clock.

He went no more on Saturday afternoons to the Grand Cane Saloon. Robert V. provided him with ample recreation and fellowship. The boy and the farm took up all his time. The cornstalks were now yellow, and the fodder had to be pulled and stored in the loft above the barn. Then came the harvesting of the corn itself, a much harder job. With the help of an occasional hired negro for the field, and Aunt Susan on Mondays and Tuesdays to wash the clothes, Lalaunay himself did all the house and farm work.

And though the Louisiana cotton farmer has several small and incidental crops to harvest and sell before the great green field blackens and then bursts into white in the late summer, the midsummer is one of the two easy times of the year for him; and the old infidel and the young exile now intensified their acquaintance, to the continuously increasing satisfaction of both. With Rip, the fuzzy-faced, brown hunting dog, prowling through the woods on the banks, they drifted down the slow-moving bayou in the flat-bottomed bateau,

evading logs and stumps and new-fallen trees, each a fresh adventure to the boy; stopping now by a cypress hulk where Lalaunay lifted in a struggling trout, now by a group of water lilies where Robert V., with close-pressed lips, lifted in a two-inch perch with his short pole. The first time the young Italian caught a fish he exhibited a wild passion of excited joy that swept over even his aged instructor.

At noon there was lunch under the pines that towered to mysterious heights in the air. Lalaunay usually slept for an hour or two on the soft brown carpet of last season's straw in the afternoon; Robert V. continued his investigations of his eternally thrilling environment. Then, late in the day, the old man pushed the bateau back upstream with a long pole, the sun slid down behind the pine trees, an early owl hooted over in the darkening woods at a fascinatingly occult distance, the air cooled, and finally the bateau shoved its flat nose over the wet sands at Lalaunay's landing.

On work days as well as on these holidays the little Italian usually stayed close by his delighted instructor and audience, but on the morning of the first Monday in August Robert V. became so interested in Aunt Susan's pot of boiling clothes that he agreed to stay at home while Lalaunay went to town to attend to some business. While the old man stood in the dark rear end of a dry-goods store he heard two women, up near the front door, carrying on a conversation that suddenly seized and held his attention.

"Yes," went on one, "it's just awful to think about. My cook knows a daughter of Aunt Susan's, and she says that he has already named the poor boy Robert Voltaire—you know?—frightful infidel Voltaire was; and the 'Robert' is for Ingersoll, who was just as bad. What do you think of that?"

"It's terrible, that's what I think," said the other woman, who was no less a personage than Mrs. Fothergill herself. "And the poor little fellow is such a darling. We drive out that way sometimes in the afternoons, and occasionally we see him playing near the road. His big

black eyes fascinate me, and his voice sounds like violin music. And to think of the way his morals must be corrupted by that dreadful man! I know he is not getting proper care and training."

"Simply awful," declared the first woman. "He ought to be taken away. Show me some French percales, please," she went on to the clerk.

In their shop talk they interpolated many more incidentally indignant remarks about Robert V. and his guardian. The old man, smiling grimly, gave his attention to his own business again. But he hurried out of town, and the two women remained in the back of his mind as disturbing memories.

When the wagon reached Chapman's little general store, a mile out of Tournaine, where outbound farmers buy the things they have forgotten in town, the old man saw Aunt Susan charging down the road. At sight of him she came running.

"He's los', Mister 'Launay!" she gasped, as she reached the wagon and leaned her head wearily and fearfully on the front wheel.

"Who?" he asked fiercely, though he did not need to ask.

"Robbie Vee. Right after de five o'clock train come th'oo I walks to de bank of Black Cypress an' I see him projeckin' in de ole bateau. 'You min' out whut you doin' dere, boy,' I says. An' he says, 'Gwan'—you know how funny he talks—he says, 'Gwan, I'm a boatman.' Well, suh, I goes back to de washin', an', please God, whut wif dis thing an' dat, I forgits all 'bout dat boy ontill a while ago; den, when I go to de bank to call out, 'Robbie Vee!' dere ain't no boy an' ain't no boat. I runs down de bank a little piece, but—"

"Gid in de wagon, you damn ole fool," Lalaunay cried fiercely; and Siroc and the black mule went galloping home. "Ef you had ron down day bayou far enough you had foun' dad boy sure in a litt' bit wile. Bud now—look! Dark is comin'."

It was not long before the team thundered over the resounding wooden bridge. The old man tied the horses

just inside the gate, and, snatching a lantern out of the house and calling Rip, ran out of the gate and along the north bank of the bayou. He yelled back at Aunt Susan to stay at the house

Experienced as he was in the woods, he frequently fell over slippery cypress knees and tangled himself up in brambles of thorn bushes. His mind considered twenty ways in which the boy could fall out of the boat and drown; he plunged on faster every time he thought of a new way. Now and then he shouted his and the exile's familiar yell, sacrificing time to stop and listen for an answer; the pines absorbed his voice, sighing and moaning above him.

It seemed that he had been smashing through the woods two or three hours. Yet it could not be more than half past six o'clock, he knew; the tall trees shut out the sun early. There was going to be only a piece of a moon, and the clouds might hide that. His breath was tearing its way out of his chest. The water sloshed and sucked in his shoes, softening the skin of his heels so that they were rubbing bloody raw; but he could not risk struggling barefooted through these woods. His legs were weakening under him.

Suddenly he noted that he was shouting and crashing on without waiting for an answer. Objects were now so dim and blurred that he might pass the boy without seeing him; if he was still alive, he might be asleep in the bateau, or knocked senseless somehow. He knew he wasn't logical—that he was, strangely for him, going to pieces. With desperate strength he forced himself to stop and listen after he had shouted.

"Hey-yoh!"

Faintly the call came to him from down the bayou, and in his excitement he plunged on. His heart seemed to squeeze into a suffocating knot at the thought that maybe it was only an echo of his call. Pressing his hands to his thumping breast, uttering no cry, he strained his ears ahead. This was a test. He heard only the low rippling water, the katydids, the whip-poor-wills, the sighing pines. He was wrong.

"Hey-yoh!"

He was right! Bellowing as if he would blast out his chest, he rushed on. But maybe it was not Robert V.; it might be some negro fisherman whose shout he had mistaken. His ears strained at the shout as it came again to him. It was Robert V. But in the settling darkness he could not see the bateau.

Now there it was, a hundred feet ahead, caught between two black logs. "Hey-yoh!" The boy called, a great glad note in his voice. The old man could not shout now. He could see Robert V. standing up with the pole in his hands, manfully trying to push the bateau loose. He longed to shout over that. Rip was barking from the bank.

Lalaunay was opposite the bateau. Plunging into the water, he swam to the boat, climbed in with the help of a log and gathered the boy silently into his arms. The little Italian impulsively tied his short arms around the old man's dewlapped neck.

"Gee, I nearly got lost!" he said after a while.

The water lapped and rippled around the bateau and the black stumps. The katydids droned on; the pines sighed and moaned up through the air. Old Lalaunay the infidel said nothing. Swimming back to the bank, he led the way home, never knowing that he was tired. It was full dark when they arrived.

Though he commanded Aunt Susan not to tattle about this adventure of Robert V.'s, he was rightly certain that she would report it in gorgeous detail. On the following Tuesday the *Touraine Trumpet* had a short account of it, with an editorial entitled, "A Mother's Care," in which the bachelor editor delivered many words on the upbringing of children, laying special stress on the necessity of a Christian woman's constant care and guidance. In several following issues appeared letters under the modest *noms de plume* of "Justice," "Charity," "Love," and "Mercy," wherein the writers first diplomatically complimented the editor on his sage words and then went on to speak of a "pathetic case not far away."

Lalaunay read them all, felt them all, and was furious that he noticed any of

them; and kept Robert V. always near him. That woman's statement, "He's not getting proper care and training," came out of the back of his mind a dozen times a day and frightened him. Scrutinizing himself sternly, the old man decided that he must set aside, for possible use when Robert V. should get old enough to exercise a free choice in relation to them, his only two profane expletives—"hell" and "damn." So they were put in the closet, with Ingersoll and Voltaire; nor did he ever know that the ones the exile clung to so tenaciously he had brought with him from Mulberry Street, New York.

Then there appeared in the *Trumpet* a letter, signed "Sympathy," which raged against making "children slave their little lives out," though the round-faced exile gave no hints of departing this life. But still most of the allusions to Robert V. that came to Lalaunay, by way of letters to the weekly paper, editorials, reports of Aunt Susan, remarks heard in Touraine's streets and stores, kindly meant words spoken to the boy at play near the road, all had to do with "a woman's care." On account of these a frightening suggestion sprang into the old man's mind one day, was put aside instantly, came back with more and more frequency, and hardened into a desperate plan by the time the last picking of cotton had been sent to the gin.

It involved Mrs. Cates, widow of uncertain years but of certain old age, with a hard jaw and a light-colored mustache, who affected sweetness of expression and a rush of energy. Mrs. Cates went about among the houses of Touraine carrying a somber gray telescope case. In it were a streaky-red cocoa soap that made you itch for a week; a new kind of baby cap, ordered through the mails by her, and not kept in the regular stores—thank goodness; a patent batter cake turner, manufactured where batter cakes are unknown; a gob of dingy lace which she characterized with a word the first part of which she swallowed, but of which the last part was, rightly, the plural of "sin"; and many more such articles, constituting in all the most diabolically complete collection of unde-

sired articles in the world. And in all her travels through Touraine and its environs, including even the regions around Black Cypress, she left the impression in every womanless house that she would like to enter in and make it "homey."

So that early one Sunday morning in November old Lalaunay hitched up the gray stallion and the black Spanish mule, set Robert V. on the high spring seat and drove to the house of Mrs. Cates, in the flat below Chapman's store. She should come as housekeeper; he would pay her a monthly salary.

The short, pallid, portly woman, with eager humility, conducted the infidel and the exile into her parlor, which, as regards its contents, was a sort of enlarged gray telescope case. Before she could ask him to be seated old Lalaunay stated his case.

"I wan' you come an' live wid us," he ran on rapidly, in the determination to end the unpleasant job. "I pay you—"

"Oh, my husband!" she exclaimed, rushing at him and throwing her arms around the tall old man's waist, and resting her head on his stomach, as if she meant to butt him in that tender vicinage. With tremendous effort he restrained himself from choking her.

"Ver' well," he said after a while, sighing; and, disengaging himself, went out and drove home.

"Gee, what was the ole dame tryin' to do to you?" asked Mulberry Street, as Siroc and the mule, taking their own time, walked along the road.

"Dass yo' mamma," said Lalaunay, disregarding the question.

"Da hell it is!" flared out this descendant of ravishing Romans and smashing Vandals. "I ain't got no mamma, and don't want none, not like her."

"S-sh," warned the old infidel at the sound of the forbidden "hell," holding up his hand in sad deprecation. "W'ad I tole you hof doze bad words?"

The next day Jean Marie Lalaunay drove to town and married Mrs. Cates; nobody ever took the trouble to know her first name. On his way out of town he picked up the things she wanted to

carry away, just then, from her former home. As the wagon crossed Black Cypress Bayou he reached down, snatched up the gray telescope case and threw it into the water; he had seen what was in it more than once.

"You dear!" gurgled the bride. She had no further use for it; she and everybody else in town knew that Lalaunay's bank account was always upward of three thousand dollars.

Now Mrs. Cates—no one ever called her anything else—settled down to enjoy the long-desired leisure that had been withheld from her, the assumed rush of energy dropping away with the assumed sweetness of expression. She made practically no difference in the housework, but she was worth the price, Lalaunay felt. The letters to the paper about "a mother's care" stopped. The haunting fear put into his mind by that woman in the store who had said, "He ought to be taken away," was banished.

The second easy time of the year for the cotton farmer was now come; and, with almost no work to do, the old infidel and the young exile ranged through the woods with Rip and a shotgun hunting: on the pine hills for brown fox squirrels; in the post oak flats for gray cat squirrels; across sage-covered old fields for quail; along the log-strewn bayou for teal and mallard and wood ducks; while everywhere, at any moment, a molly-cotton-tail rabbit might spring up from behind a stump and race away, Rip bellowing ecstatically on his trail, the gun booming at him whenever he doubled back into sight.

Mrs. Cates did not have the enthusiasm for Black Cypress Bayou and its surrounding territory possessed by her adopted son and husband. After a month of unbroken leisure she was pinning for the town with its frequent visits and more than ample gossip. Would it not be better for dear little Robbie if they took a house in Touraine for the winter, now that the crops were all in? Rents were so cheap, on account of a population of three thousand among houses built for twenty thousand; and the company so delightful!

"No," said the fierce old man, his

brown eyes firing. But nagging was born in Mrs. Cates, a characteristic that had been developed by the gray telescope case. Finally the question was referred to Robert V., on Monday night after supper, the family sitting before the open fire in the east room.

"Naw; I wouldn't leave yere for a million dollars," said he modestly, walking over to the old man and nudging his black head against the gray, bristly cheek that had not had its weekly shave.

As Mrs. Cates, to gain her ends, was used to sniveling for women and nagging at men, so she had her own ideas about how to bring children to her mind if she could but have a chance at them. Four days she bided her time, and on Friday Lalaunay started over the bridge with two bales of cotton for the market. On second thought he decided to come back for Robert V.; he was uneasy about the boy even with the home protector assisting Aunt Susan in looking after him.

The house was empty. He heard angry words in the stable, toward which Aunt Susan was looking and shaking her head doubtfully. Striding to the stable, he saw Mrs. Cates with a stick in her hand standing furious and nonplussed before the little Italian. Lalaunay snatched open both doors, and the boy ran to him, crying out: "Da ole dame was tryin' to buldoze me into goin' to town." Walking with unhurried deliberation upon her, his eyes burning the danger lights, his breath coming hard, Lalaunay tore the stick out of her uplifted hand and threw her extended arm down against her side violently.

Mrs. Cates, dry-eyed, unafraid, elate, proceeded to the house, did up a bundle of clothes and walked up the road toward town. She was sophisticated enough to know the grounds of divorce and alimony; now she would have leisure, and that, too, among the delightful excitements of what she called "the city." Nor would she be bothered with that old man and that sassy boy. Mrs. Cates laughed as she walked along the sandy road. It had turned out even better than she had planned.

Lalaunay drove the team back across the bridge and into the yard. He knew what Mrs. Cates was thinking. Calling Rip and shouldering his gun, he led the way into the woods.

There was a court session coming the first week in December, and cases may move quickly in these courts if public opinion favors them. Mrs. Cates exhibited no fine reticence in her reports of the "violence" of the "old infidel." Aunt Susan's loyal moderation of these reports was disregarded. The *Trumpet* had a long and passionate editorial on "Wife Beating." The new Methodist preacher prayed that "a young soul close unto us may be saved from the damning taint of an anti-Christ." The fire of public opinion flamed up around old Lalaunay higher and hotter than it had ever been.

On one day he was served with papers in the divorce suit; the next day with an order to appear in court and show cause why the minor, "Johnnie Doe, sometimes known as Robert Voltaire Lalaunay," should not be taken from him as an improper guardian and given into the hands of a proper guardian by the court. He was to answer both cases the first week in December. At first he thought of employing a lawyer; but he had the insight to see that the public spirit that had given instant credence to all Mrs. Cates now said, and that had incited the guardianship suit, had already decreed that he lose both cases in court.

He was not clear as to what he would do in the end. Going to town, he bought a new Winchester rifle and a gross of cartridges and loaded shells for that and the shotgun. There were still some great days ahead in the woods. The air was chill and bracing, making walking itself a thrilling enjoyment. Almost all the leaves had fallen off the oak and sweetgum trees, thus making it easy to see hiding squirrels. Whenever Rip struck a trail the old man bellowed encouragement with an exuberance worthy of the young exile himself. He deferred to the boy's opinion, asking him frequently if he didn't think that Rip had treed the squirrel or rabbit.

Often, turning the Jersey cow, Siroc

and the black mule out into the field to pasture, and carrying with them blankets and provisions for two days, the infidel and the exile spent a night under the sighing pine trees, sniffing the woodfire smoke in the air, looking up at the stars that seemed to the boy to be so much closer than when he looked at them out of a window. To the old man it seemed that they were going back into the sky, blinking and leering at him as they went. Neither man nor boy now counted the days.

The first week in December came. One morning a lawyer's clerk caught Lalaunay as they were leaving the house for a two-day hunt; the paper he had brought said that the divorce had been granted, with fifteen dollars a month alimony, one hundred and fifty dollars lawyer's fees and one hundred dollars costs. Shoving the paper into his hunting bag, Lalaunay plunged into the woods. That night, sitting on a felled tree, after gazing a long time into the fire, with the exile snuggled between his knees, he said eagerly: "Well, boy, hare you 'aving good times deze days, eh?" Robert V. shoved up his arms, whispering in abashed but compelling affection a word he had not used since a long, dim time back in Mulberry Street—"Papa." Lowering his head into the upraised arms, the old infidel kissed the lifted face; and now the golden stars came down very close to him, for a second anyway.

When they returned home the next day after dark the sheriff, who was sitting on the back gallery, handed Lalaunay a paper; it ordered the surrender of "Johnnie Doe," as the very proper court clerk had written it. Cramming that into his hunting bag, and saying nothing, the old man marched into the house and locked all the doors. He heard the sheriff whistle, heard him give an order to someone, and then presently there came the expected posse of citizens trampling across the fiendishly rattling bridge. Interpreting the sounds that came to him, he knew that the party had separated into smaller groups and had stationed themselves behind the stable and other protective objects, but

so as to command the little three-room house from all sides. He wondered how long they would wait.

Old Lalaunay went about cooking supper quietly; he didn't see what else to do. All the time Robert V. kept up a rattling fire of questions about how you tell from the accent of a hunting dog's bellow whether he is still trailing or whether he has treed the quarry; for which the old man was glad. He was afraid the boy might hear the posse taking stations and worry about what it all might mean: as yet the infidel hadn't told him anything that might make the joy of the hunting less.

That was one of the nights when old Lalaunay cooked the squirrels the way the little Italian exile liked them best—in a black pot, with dumplings and red peppers all in it, hanging over the fire, which made the stew puff white rolls of steam from under the cover and bubble enticingly. And that night, too, sitting in the big chair before the fireplace, his pipe in his mouth, Robert V. at his usual stand between his knees, he told the full and complete story of the heroic, hell-filling jaybirds; how the blue birds had joined them for a while, but had fallen away because neither their fathers nor the other birds carried sand in their bills to torment to put out the fires. Then he put the boy to bed and sat down before the fire, waiting.

"Come on, papa," called out the exile. "I gotta hug you like a bear before I can go to sleep."

But the old man sat still, wondering wistfully if Robert V. would really call him again, perhaps twice again; and, of course, the wearied little hunter fell instantly to sleep, calling to no one except in his dreams, and that was to old Rip most of the time.

After a while Lalaunay tipped to the corner of the room and picked up the Winchester, which he inspected, oiled, reloaded with fresh cartridges and set near the door leading out on the back porch. On the floor handy to the gun, he laid out two boxes of cartridges with their lids torn off. Sinking again into the chair, he stared into the dying fire, his gray face fallen between his hands.

A couple of hours later he bestirred himself effortfully, putting more wood into the fireplace; but he had to stick fat pine under the logs and get on his knees to blow on it, so low and cold had the fire fallen. The odor of the fizzing resin in the kindling was grateful to him, and he wished that Robert V. might smell it, for he liked it. Then he dropped back into the chair and stared. So went the night and nothing happened.

Presently—it had not seemed long since the boy had gone to bed—the morning was signaled. Dully the old man noted its coming. The cumbersome Plymouth rooster, in the China tree by the ash hopper, thumped his sides and crowed hoarsely; and there were some blurred comments among the wakening hens. The eastern window, over Robert V.'s bed, was a square of pallid gray, a little less gray at the top where it had been pulled down. Now the glass oil lamp on the pineboard center table, which had burned all night, seemed sickeningly superfluous. The incoming air smelled of the warming, dew-wet earth. The red birds in the trees by the bayou, below the front gallery, where the bateau was swinging at its clinking chain, were flitting across the narrow channel spilling their liquid notes that seemed to fall on the water and leap up more liquid still.

It was very cold. The old man decided that he must make a fire, because Robert V. would be getting up pretty soon.

There was a crunching step on the front gallery, and a heavy knock at the door.

"Jean Lalaunay?" called the sheriff's voice, not harshly.

The old man ran both hands wearily through the grisly gray beard on his face, staring at the few red coals that leered out malignantly at him from the high-piled ashes.

"Lalaunay, we've just got to have the boy," went on the sheriff. "The court says so. These men out here are mad clean through. In ten minutes, if you don't hold a white cloth out of that east window, we're comin' in. You know what that means. There are fourteen of us."

The infidel did not hear the last of the ultimatum, for the exile, awakened by the sheriff, had sat up in bed and was screwing his brown fists into his eyes, the sun playing all over him. Now there was energy and fire in old Lalaunay. Leaping up, he lifted the boy out of bed, held him tight in his arms a moment, and then put on his clothes.

"Are we goin' after fox squirrels or quail today, papa?" he asked, thinking that the swift dressing meant an early start. "I'm all ready now—'ceptin' for breakfas'."

Snatching up the Winchester, the lean and haggard old man squinted through a knothole in the corner of the room and fired through it once into the air, in a half-insane hope that the besiegers would conclude that they needed a larger force and so go away, giving them one more day together in the woods. And if he got away to the woods with the boy, maybe a week would go by before they would catch him; maybe he would desert the farm and the stock, which he knew the sheriff had been depending on to hold him in Louisiana, and drift on into— A dozen bullets tore through the upper walls. He knew that was but a warning. To effect his purpose he must hit one of them. Squinting again through the hole, he took careful aim this time.

"Papa!" Looking down to see the meaning of the choking sound, he saw the boy crouching at his knees, the big black eyes filled with the first terror he had seen there. Lalaunay shook his head violently, as if composing his wits: a death in the posse might not send it away, after all, and if bullets came through the walls—well, there was Robert V. It was all over. That should have been clear the night before, but he had had the boy with him eight hours longer, anyhow.

He did not hold any white cloth out of the east window. Leading the exile by the hand, he opened the door and walked out on the porch looking toward the bare, black cotton field, unarmed. The members of the posse rode into the yard from four directions.

"You've got sense," commented the

sheriff. "Put him up behind me. Son, you will let me ride in front, won't you?"

"Am I goin' for a ride?" asked the boy, looking with joyful anticipation up into the old man's face.

"Yass, Robert V.," he said gently. Then to the sheriff: "Who s'll 'ave 'im now?"

"Mr. Fothergill."

"I s'all bring hall 'is clo'es."

"Never mind," spoke up the man on the fat bay horse. "I will send for them."

Lalaunay shrugged his shoulders, and, putting his hands under Robert V.'s arms, lifted him up on the gray horse behind the sheriff. The group stood still, in painful suspense.

"Robert V., attention," said the old infidel sharply, effortfully raising his face, but keeping his brown eyes half closed that the men might not see all that was in them.

"All right, papa."

"You muz nevair spick doze bad words dad I forbid you—'hell' an' 'damn'."

"Never again," said Robert V., repeating an old and revered promise, thinking that he was but paying for the indulgence of a horseback ride.

"Cross doze hearts, boy."

"I cross my heart."

"Remember hour jaybirds, boy, to kill no one of 'im except on Fridays."

"Not to kill no jaybirds 'ceptin' on Fridays, an' then do it if you can get to 'em."

Throwing up his right arm in a gesture of finality, Lalaunay the infidel turned and walked up the steps of the back porch. With the unseeing cruelty of ignorance and childhood, the impetuous little exile rode off gay, expecting a new adventure, digging his heels into the horse's flanks to make him go faster.

All his muscles caught up to assist his ears, the old man strained to catch the last of the horses' hoofs on the rattling, loose-planked bridge; and when they had clattered from it and into the sound-deadening, sandyland road, his lean figure collapsed as if it had suddenly been untied in a hundred places; and he shuffled into the house, closing the door behind him softly.

THE HARVEST HAND

By Harry Kemp

HOT, later June: the midday sun blazed down
Above a little flat-roofed Western town,
While, mile on mile, dappled with wind and sun,
The multitudinous-headed, billowy wheat
Rippled and shimmered in the midday heat;
Reapers were whirring; harvest was begun.

In the town's park a vacant bandstand stood,
And round it lounged a noisy multitude
Of men drawn thither by the lure of wheat.
Some come for work, and some to win away
At dice and cards the others' harvest pay. . . .
They filled the grass, and overflowed the street.

And still in dusty flocks they straggled in,
With luggage or without, long, short, fat, thin—
Hoboes, and schoolboys looking for a lark
And due for aching arms and blistered hands—
They dropped from puffing trains in dusty bands
And lit the river's edge with fires at dark.

Ice boxes were depleted of their store,
Chicken roosts robbed, and every kitchen door
Was knocked by beggars twenty times a day;
Tramps, yeggs and vagrants—every hue and kind—
Swarmed in, until the townsmen, of one mind,
Wished the wheat harvested, and them away.

They pitched quoits close to where the farmers hitched,
And quarreled, cursed and jested as they pitched,
And sprawled and read torn papers in the shade;
Gambled, and swapped tales, each of his own worth,
And told how they had roamed about the earth,
And interchanged the Hobo's stock-in-trade.

To them a farmer came . . . A young man played
At horseshoes now, his open shirt displayed
A neck turned like Apollo Belvedere's;
He swung upon his left foot light and free
Apoise like cloud-descending Mercury—
A limber college lad of twenty years.

The horseshoe circled through the air and flew
Right on the peg—another . . . on it. . . . "Two
Ringers," his partner called. "We've got 'em beat."

THE SMART SET

The player took his coat and walked away;
 The farmer leaned to speak to him: "Good day,
 Young fellow! Want to help me with my wheat?"

"I will, if you can take my partner here."

"My neighbor can."

"How much?"

"Enough—don't fear!

Two and a half a day, and board."

"All right!"

The young men flung their baggage in the back,
 The farmer gave his horses' thighs a whack,
 And a thick cloud of dust hid them from sight.

Jack rabbits bobbed their long ears through the green
 Alfalfa fields, now dropping back unseen,

Now rising at the end of a long leap
 Like swimmers coming up through waves at sea;
 And, rolling far and wide illimitably,

Ran miles of grain gold-ripe for men to reap.

And headers in wide fields along the road
 With rolling reels and moving horses showed

And made a sleepy sound like distant rain;

The latticed-sloping header-boxes went

Beside them, taking in the full tide sent

Upward, of canvas-carried streams of grain.

Four bastioned clouds of toppled gold and snow

Peered over the sky's edge; another, slow,

Swam out, and drew a continent of shade,

That lingered after it, across the grain,

Then left the void without one fleecy stain

To mark the dome of quiet blue it made. . . .

And now the little flat-roofed Western town

Lay mile on mile behind; and night came down. . . .

Across the prairie lights gleamed here and there—

And now the horses quickened as they clomb

The last rise in the road, and were at home.

Across the yard a lantern's smoky flare

Lit two long legs that scissored through the gloom.

It was a farmhand came. . . . There was no room;

So one boy slept that night in the stifling mow;

The other went across to the next farm,

While dogs for miles around took up alarm. . . .

And both of them were harvest workers now.

The first, John Anson, lay awake till morn,

Hearing the horses stir and munch their corn,

Then slid into the flow of a soft dream,

When, to the dim light of their lanterns' flame,

The twilight-risen harvest workers came,

Each one to feed and curry his own team.

"Get over, Pete!" and "Where's my currycomb gone?"
So (the east olive-gray with windy dawn,

The gray moon sick with sunrise) round by round
Anson groped down the ladder. . . . Someone beat
Upon a pan. . . . The men pushed in to eat,
And drank their coffee with a sucking sound.

"What's your name, lad?"

"John Anson."

"From the East?"

"Yes." . . .

For a moment the mouth-smacking ceased,
And round the men a wave of interest ran. . . .
"What! Only one egg! Best take three or four. . . ."
"I have no appetite. . . . No, thanks—no more. . . ."
"You'll have to *eat* to stand the harvest, man!"

As for the others . . . Anyone would think
Them Norsemen all, to see them eat and drink:
Bacon and eggs and pancakes, piles of bread. . . .
"Just wait until the sun burns over noon;
Tomorrow he will sing a different tune
Or I'm a liar!" big Bill Adams said,

Helping himself to his third plate of eggs.
"Yes, or the strength will drop out of his legs
And he'll cave in and go on back to town."
With this they hurried forth and drove afield
To gather in the ripened harvest yield
Where the hot sun already sizzled down.

The hot sun sizzled down, the sky blazed bare,
A barren brooding blue. No cloud was there
To trail its moving shadow o'er the wheat;
And up and down the buzzing reaper went,
Casting its flooding grain-flow upward-sent
Into the latticed header-box. The heat

Sent the sweat pouring forth in itchy streams.
To John, the novice, it already seems
That he has worked a full half-day or more
Ere a slow hour has dragged. Straws smite his ears;
Sweat stings his eyes; chaff fills them full of tears;—
He labors like a slave chained to an oar,

Spreading the heads out even. At the stack,
Though straining till he aches in all his back,
Another wagon waits their place. "Doggone it,"
His driver shouts; "we're getting in the road. . . .
How in the heck can we heave off a load
When *you* lift at each forkful standing on it?

"Here—let me show you!" After which it comes
Easier to John, though his veins beat like drums
About his ears. "Football's an hour or two,
But here you're on the leap the whole day long
Not cheered by schoolmates with a college song,
And sixteen hours a day before you're through!"

THE SMART SET

He shot a glance up from his red-streaked eye:

"Won't the sun ever mount up in the sky!"

The brackish water tasted like rare wine.

"Thank God! At last!"

"Come, boys!" the farmer said.

John snatched his straw hat from his sweat-drenched head.

A waving apron moved—the dinner sign. . . .

Bob (Anson's partner) ran through the same mill

On the next farm, till he, too, grew in skill

And learned endurance of the heavy grind;

He, too, fought with their enemy, the wheat,

And sprawled about the load on slipping feet,

And reveled in each little cooling wind.

That afternoon wore slowly to an end. . . .

Homeward by moonrise men and horses wend.

John's muscles tremble from the unused strain.

A fellow quit that night, and so, instead

Of the close mow, he had a cot for bed;

But nightmares seized upon his tired brain.

He thought that he lay prone beneath the sky

And giants heaped wheat on him mountain-high;

He strove in vain to cast the weight aside;

And if his legs were not held ramrod-straight

Tense cramps would come and seize on them, nor bate

Until he rose and rubbed and almost cried.

At breakfast the men held themselves in wait

Till for the second time he heaped his plate,

Then forth into unbridled mirth they broke.

"The kid has changed his diet overnight."

"Work always did improve the appetite."

John ate, and groaned, and snarled against their joke.

So galled and sore that he could hardly walk,

Scant wish had he to jest with them or talk.

He felt like quitting, swore he would by noon.

But soon the stiffness wore away, and he

Grew blithest of the rowdy company

And leaned against his fork, and hummed a tune.

And, then, the farmer's daughter, home again,

Put brightness in the faces of the men

By her sweet singing presence. She had been

To Kansas City visiting a friend. . . .

John hoped the world would sooner come to end

Than the last load of wheat be gathered in;

For she was like a cloudless morning. Soon

They sat alone beneath the mounting moon

Despite the next day's work each woke to do;

And the old game between the two began

That has been played ever since woman and man

Lived in the Garden and were only Two.

A whip-poor-will sang in a cottonwood tree;
Far off another answered plaintively;
A thousand little night things woke and cried,
And the wide body of the bulging moon,
Orbed to the full globe of its plenilune,
Upon the silver elm-tops seemed to ride.

Clouds caught, and broke across its amber face
And trailed themselves into dissolving lace. . . .
His hand found hers as if it thought and knew:
For the most loveless heart in love's despite
Could scarce resist a woman, stars and night—
John only did what any man would do.

They felt akin. They loved. Their pulses burned
As through each other's eyes they each discerned
New worlds; for she, above the cook-stove's heat,
Dreamed, as she worked, helping her mother cook:
He, where the sun blazed down, with visions shook
While grappling with the pouring hills of wheat.

Their growing love seized on each idle space,
And Anson with his sun-browned boyish face
Walked with her Sundays. Sweet the thrill that comes
When all the banners of the heart unroll
And all the flowers of life break in the soul
And Fancy marches with her fifes and drums. . . .

The prairie like a purple map spread far,
And here and there a village like a star
Flashed in the distance; they sat on a hill
Hand mixed with hand; the sky wall, far away,
Seemed to push out and break beyond the day
Until its blue edge touched God's window sill.

At any moment something might look out
Divine, of that the lovers held no doubt;
They floated in eternity together.
They leaned against a ledge whose lime-traced shell
Into the depths of some old ocean fell
And now lay bared beneath the tooth of weather.

Tears rushed up in their eyes; a sacred awe
Came on them out of space. Their spirits saw
The meaning of the Man and Woman's tryst.
All that religions sanction or condemn
Swept like a prairie whirlwind over them:
And they were caught to heaven as they kissed.

A mover's wagon, passing at the base
Of Pawnee Rock, again brought time and space
Into their ken, and, light at heart as birds,
Homeward they strolled along the winding way,
Feeling within their hearts as ones that pray,
Without a word, beyond the need of words.

THE SMART SET

Flashing along the fence a striped squirrel ran.
On either side the road, right fair to scan,
 Leaned crowds of sunflowers full of golden faces.
A crimson-budded cactus here and there
Spread earlike where the ground was baked and bare;
 And wood doves cooed and cooed in shady places.

Homeward the lovers passed, as much at peace
As was the stainless sky where trailed no fleece
 Of golden cloud; the sun sank red and low,
Flinging out bands of tranquil evening light,
While in the east the purple fringe of night
 Began to widen upward and to grow.

But jolly Bob, his mirth was soured with gloom;
('Tis fate, I guess—two men in the same room
 May sleep when lightning strikes, one go unshent;)
Love had struck Bob, too, but: "It cannot be."
Thus she had spoken; and so, gloomily
 He stuffed his suitcase, damned his luck, and went.

"This Kansas, how I hate it!" Bob began,
"It was the last in the Creator's plan—
 He took the leavings when all else was made."
"Not so," quoth John. "It was the first begun:
Here Eden stood when the round world was done."
 "It has gone back since then," the other said;

"I hate it. . . . This won't last long. . . . Soon a draught
Will bring its wealth and boastfulness to naught:
 'Twas meant for coyotes, rattlesnakes and steers;
Some day the locusts will rain down again
As they've done in the memory of men."
 "There is no danger, Bob; those lean-ribbed years

"Have gone forever. Rich in wheat and corn
And crowding herds, redeemed from reach of scorn,
 Serene like a great Titaness she stands,
My dear loved Kansas, in herself secure,
No more a jesting-stock or barren lure,
 She feeds the hungry nations with both hands."

"Oh, very well—adopt the blasted State!
I'm sorry that I've got an hour to wait
 Until my train comes. Then I'll bid good-bye
To sand and chiggers, bearded grain that crawls
Like something living up one's overalls,
 And hell-hot plains top-heavy with blue sky."

So John swung on his heel and homeward rode
With head and shoulders high, while evening glowed
 With sunset pinnacles of gold and fire.
Dreams of the future filled his breast with joy—
For all the Man had wakened in the boy;
 And in his heart there was a man's desire.

THE AMERICAN: HIS MORALS

By H. L. Mencken

“**M**ORE than any other people,” said Wendell Phillips, in one of his penetrating flashes, “we Americans are afraid of one another.” He might have added, as an obvious corollary, “and merciless to one another.” The national fear of giving offense, in truth, has the soundest of prudence in it: it is fed constantly by new evidence of what happens to the man who treads upon the communal corns. A scream of rage—and he is flat upon his spine. And swiftly upon the heels of that condign felling, before ever he can lift his voice in his defense, or even in apology and appeal for grace, the process continues as follows:

1. The removal of his liver and lights.
2. The deposit of a cake of ice in the cavity.
3. The burial of the corpse.

A natural consequence, perhaps, of democracy. An inevitable symptom of that emotional mob-thinking which distrusts all genuine distinction on the one hand, and is eternally eager for an *auto-da-fé* on the other. Wherever and whenever the mob has ruled, it has leaned to like proceedings. You remember, of course, the program of Wat Tyler and his honest hinds—how they stopped each stranger they met on the road to London and demanded to know if he could read and write; and how, if he said yes, they bawled, “He confesses!” and forthwith hanged him to the nearest oak. So, again, in the French Revolution: if there was one thing more astounding than the mob’s fickleness, it was the mob’s senseless savagery. It killed men for crimes that were improbable and even incredible, and its favorite for killing was always some

amateur messiah whose hand it had licked the day before.

So, too, in the Rome of the First Triumvirate and in the English Commonwealth: democracy is the same forever. It makes for an irrational, explosive, get-a-rope way of doing things. It puts the wayward passion and biliousness of the hour above all settled conviction and policy. Menaced everlastingly by the chance that the minority of today may become the majority of tomorrow, that black may turn suddenly white, that the wholly virtuous may become the wholly vile, it falls into the habit of striking from the shoulder while a nose is actually within reach. In other words, the majority heaps penalties upon the minority in the hope of crippling it beyond recovery, or, failing that, of drawing out its recovery as long as possible. And the method thus pursued in the field of purely political combat is used again in the field of morals. Immorality, in the abstract, is not frowned upon by democracy. On the contrary, democracy is itself immoral, and its highest rewards go to successful acts of immorality. Its central doctrine, indeed, is that all human valuations are subject to change overnight, and it holds that there is a positive merit in thus overturning them. But the man who makes the attempt *and fails* must pay a swift and staggering penalty for his failure. His sin is not against any ideal of abstract and immutable virtue, not against any *jure divino* or *jus naturæ*, but against the security and *amour-propre* of the majority. And the punishment for that sin does not flow from any remote and icy fountain of justice, but from the blind rage of a mob.

Thus we find in the very constitution of the American commonwealth a reason for the strange timorousness which marks the American—a timorousness noted by Harriet Martineau, De Tocqueville, Follen, Emerson and Channing before ever Phillips pointed it out and moralized upon it, and by Maurice Low, Nicholas Murray Butler, Hugo Münsterberg and many another anatomist of the national character after him. But this reason is not the whole reason. It accounts for the fear of the individual, but it does not account for the moral obsession of the mass. It explains why the punishment of the erring is so devastating, but it does not explain why the community should be so eager to smell the erring out.

That further explanation is to be found, I believe, in the continued survival of a dominating taint of Puritanism in the American character—a survival no less real and corrupting because many of its outward evidences have been concealed by time. Since the very dawn of his separate history, the American has been ruled by what may be called a moral conception of life. He has thought of all things as either right or wrong, and of the greater number of them, perhaps, as wrong. He has ever tended, apparently irresistibly, to reduce all questions of politics, of industrial organization, of art, of education, and even of fashion and social etiquette, to questions of ethics. Every one of his great political movements has been a moral movement; in almost every line of his literature there is what Nietzsche used to call moralic acid; he never thinks of great men and common men, of valuable men and useless men, but only of good men and bad men. And to this moral way of thinking he adds a moral way of acting. That is to say, he feels that he is bound to make an active war upon whatever is bad, that his silence is equivalent to his consent, that he will be held personally responsible, by a sharp-eyed, long-nosed God, for all the devilry that goes on around him. The result, on the one hand, is a ceaseless buzzing and slobbering over moral issues, many of them wholly artificial and ridiculous,

and on the other hand, an incessant snouting into private conduct, in the hope of bringing new issues to light. In brief, the result is Puritanism.

This national Puritanism, of course, has been considerably modified, in materials if not in method, by the passage of the years, and is still in process of laborious evolution. At the start, as everyone knows, it was inextricably mingled with purely theological ideas. In all of the early colonies, at least in the North, it was a great deal more dangerous for a man to go astray in exegesis than to go astray in conduct. Under the Massachusetts theocracy, for example, the punishment for heresy was far heavier than the punishment for adultery, or even than the punishment for ordinary murder. But by the time the constitution of the new republic came to be framed, this old snorting over the affairs of heaven had been eased, in a measure, by the pressing importance of the affairs of this earth, and so the hostile factions were ready to accept the compromise proposed by Thomas Jefferson and other such neutrals, declaring a permanent truce of God in religion. As Maurice Low points out, it was the bitter need of the hour and not any genuine toleration that lay at the bottom of this truce. The breach between Quaker and Catholic, churchman and dissenter, was still unspanable, but they chose to forget it in the face of common perils and a common hatred. Each faction held hunkerously to its own creed, but it was ready to abandon its right to damn and penalize the creeds of the others.

But this very sacrifice in the department of theology made for an increase of activity in the department of morality. The scope of puritanical endeavor was suddenly narrowed, but the puritanical spirit remained. If it was now impossible to throw a fellow man to the wolves for confusing the Hebrew vowel points, it was still possible to throw him to the wolves for mistaking some other fellow's wife for his own, and to this and like ferocities the Americans addressed themselves with holy fire. The country became, in brief, a bull ring of malignant moralists, each bent upon forcing the

whole population to greater and greater feats of personal asepsis, and all bawling like the devil. Religion, ceasing to be a conflict of principles—intelligible at least, however absurd—became a mere debauch of unordered and gaudy emotions, an orgy of enthusiasms, a frenzy almost pathological and wholly obscene. This was the period of great revivals, of entire counties converted to holiness *en masse* and brought bellowing to the mourners' bench. Thus and then was prohibition born, and the jihad against tobacco with it, and the campaign against swearing, and the vice crusade, and a dozen such donkeyish ecstasies and outrageous invasions of private morals. The camp meeting, invented by negroes but once removed from cannibalism, was adopted by the whole population—and survives today as the chautauqua. Morality raged like a pestilence. No human act, however natural and innocent, escaped a destructive moral analysis. Even the language, as Bartlett tells us in his "Dictionary of Americanisms," was spayed and fitted with skirts. Such words as "bull" and "mare," in the forties and fifties, became "male cow" and "female horse." "Stomach" (held virtuous for some reason unknown) was stretched to include the whole region from the nipples to the pelvic arch. The forthright nouns and adjectives of a franker if no less moral day were covered with such gossamers as "the social evil," "a statutory offense," "a house of ill fame" and "an interesting condition."

In politics appeared the same exaltation of moral issues and moral reasoning. There has been no great political movement in the United States since Jefferson's day without some purely moral balderdash at its center. The long battle against slavery, for example, was led from first to last by men obsessed by the wickedness of the slaveowners, and eager to put it down at any cost in blood and sweat. The historians, true enough, show us that slavery was economically unsound, and that irresistible natural laws worked toward its destruction, but no one thought of its economical unsoundness during the two decades before the Civil War. It was the *moral* un-

soundness of the thing that inflamed the North and sent John Brown across the Potomac and provoked four years of unparalleled wrath and butchery. The Abolitionists were not moved by any fear that the South was going bankrupt, nor even by any tangible feeling that the North was suffering unfair competition, but simply and solely by an uncontrollable craving, entirely puritanical in character, to make the Southerners change their brand of virtue. It was their unalterable conviction that they themselves were wholly good and that the Southerners were wholly bad, and they thought it was their supreme duty, as custodians of the divine grace, to purge and punish the erring. In brief, they were Puritans of the purest ray. They were willing to sacrifice everything, including even the State itself, to force their private morals upon unwilling sinners.

The same mania, always taking extremely hysterical forms, is evident in all our other political experiments and revolutions. A new political idea, however persuasively it may be set forth, never takes hold upon the American imagination until it is put into terms of a sonorous morality. I need not point out how our political mountebanks have always given poignancy to their issues by the simple process of finding (or inventing) villains to denounce. The great heroes of the common people have seldom brought anything actually new to the problems they have presumed to solve. Jackson was not the author of the so-called Jacksonian scheme of mob rule, and Bryan was not the discoverer of the free silver panacea, and Roosevelt was not the father of any of his vast and irreconcilable brood of remedies. But Jackson *did* convince the chandala that their betters were robbing them, and Bryan *did* convince them that the trusts were crucifying them, and Roosevelt *did* convince them there were vast, horrible and unintelligible conspiracies against them, and so these rabble-rousers got their ears and inflamed them to multitudinous follies. The touchstone, in every case, was their moral hyperesthesia, their weakness for reducing all

ideas to terms of right and wrong, their eternal eagerness to burn a concrete and screaming sinner.

But how does it happen that this Puritan point of view has survived the swift and radical changes of a century? How, for one thing, has it survived the opposition of the 30,000,000 immigrants who have poured into the country since 1830—many of them from lands untouched by Puritanism, some of them from environments bitterly hostile to it? And how, for another thing, has it survived the changing conditions of life at home—from the spaciousness and leisure of the country to the crowded competition of the towns, from pastoral simplicity of interests to commercial and industrial complexity? The first of these two questions answers itself if you reflect upon the newly-arrived immigrant's dominating desire to lose his differentiation as soon as possible. That differentiation is a heavy burden to him. It costs him a lot every day, not only in actual wages but also in social opportunity and public respect, to be a Mick, a Dutchman, a Bohick, a squarehead, a dago or a guiney. He is impatient to be accepted as an American, and if, by any ossification of habits, he is personally deprived of that boon, he makes sure that his children enjoy it. And public opinion supports him in his effort. All the little tricks of manner that he brought with him are laughed at, and so are his inherited ways of thinking. So long as he remains a palpable foreigner, he is a common butt, and on no higher level than the native blackamoor. No wonder he tries his best to lose his stigmata! No wonder his one hope is to speak American as the Americans speak it, to look and eat and see and smell like an American, to outfit his mind with a full stock of American ideas! And no wonder he is especially hospitable, whatever his initial repugnance, to those ideas which Americans seem to set most value upon—in other words, to the great root ideas of their national Puritanism.

This absorption of the foreigner, of course, is not wholly without its compensatory coloring of the absorbing mass. The German has ceased to be a German

in the United States, and the Russian Jew is ceasing to be either Russian or a Jew, but the American, by the same token, has become a bit of a German, and a bit of a Jew. Where large numbers of an invading race have settled together, they have broken down the native morality by their sheer weight, and substituted a sort of compromise between it and their own morality. Thus the Irish introduced their peculiar weakness for political chicanery into most of the large cities of the East—often finding a fertile soil for it, one may observe, in a native weakness almost as marked. And thus the Germans and Scandinavians in such cities as Cincinnati, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Chicago have made Puritanism draw in more than one of its horns. But in general the immigrant has done nine-tenths of the yielding. I was somewhat startled lately, for example, to hear that a number of German-American pastors had joined the Lord's Day Alliance, one of the most violent and vicious of all our native camorras of puritanical snouters. And everyone must have noticed how the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has taken on something of the national austerity and distrust of joy. On its own soil the church is far from puritanical. Its bishops in Austria, Bavaria, Spain and Italy would never think of prohibiting innocent sports on Sunday afternoons, or of arguing that a man who buys a lottery ticket will go to hell; but their brethren in this country, while perhaps not actually preaching such doctrines, have at least remained silent while other shepherds have preached them, and while complaisant legislators have sought to reinforce them with pharisaical and unenforceable laws.

As for the second question—how Puritanism has survived the changing conditions of life at home—its answer is that Puritanism has changed with them. In principle, perhaps, that yielding has been very slight. The American's point of view is still essentially puritanical. He still sees the devil's snares on all sides of him; he is still enormously interested in the private morals of his fellow men; he

is still eager to display his abhorrence of sin by cleaving off the hide of a sinner. But his repertoire of sins has been overhauled more than once: he has taken out old ones and put in new ones. In the main, it will be noted, on examination, that those he has taken out are sins that he has found it expedient or convenient to commit himself with increasing frequency and lack of concealment. And those that he has put in are sins for which he has lost all use or taste, or which he has learned to commit without having to admit it. The primitive Puritan, as we have seen, was more interested in theology than in anything else under the sun, and so he placed the discussion of it above all other enterprises, and was ever ready to hang or burn the man whose view of it offended him. But the American of today, having lost his notion of the supreme importance of theology, is impatient of the turmoil which its discussion entails, and so he has actually erected that discussion, once the first of pious duties, into a sin. Thus he has turned a complete somersault in morals and robbed Puritanism of its original aim and excuse. Religious freedom, in the few American colonies which offered it, meant the right of every man to state his belief boldly and without risk of being disemboweled. But in the republic of today it has come to mean the duty of every man to approve the belief of the other fellow, if not on the ground that he holds it himself, then at least on the ground that it is made reasonable by the other fellow's assent, and is, in any case, not worth rowing about. Once the sin lay in questioning that which happened to be orthodox; now the sin lies in the simple fact of questioning. The American still thinks that it is virtuous to crack the skull of a sinner who professes no faith at all, but he has learned to keep his hands off the sinner who merely professes the wrong one.

To be a sin, under a moral democracy, an act must meet one of two conditions: either it must be something which the majority of persons have no taste or capacity for committing, or it must be something which the average man can

commit without serious risk of being found out. To the first class, in the United States, belongs the new sin we have just been discussing. The American of today has no taste for serious religious controversy—he believes, in his normal moods, that one route to heaven is about as good as another and that all sinners will go to the same hell—and so he holds that such controversy is evil. Into the same class he puts acts that are beyond his imagination and talents—for example, seduction, piracy upon the high seas, polygamy, homicide in all the forms that require courage, usury, duelling, bull fighting, acts in restraint of free competition (*i. e.*, against the artificial security of the weak and incompetent), gambling upon any but the prettiest scale, rebellions against the marriage laws, originality in dress, efforts to overthrow the Constitution and set up a better one, and armed resistance to the tyrannies of the police and to statutes passed by corrupt and imbecile legislatures. Such acts, the delight of many undoubtedly first-rate men in all ages, are viewed with horror by the American. He groups a great many of them under the generic name of “anarchy”—and then flees from the name as from a plague. He would regard it as an act of “anarchy” to propose that the President of the United States be shipped to the Philippines and a king put in his place. And by the same token, he would regard it as “anarchy” to go about with naked legs, or to live in amity with two or three wives, or to substitute the cleanly killing of slum babies for their slow starvation, or to teach the poor how to limit their offspring, or to halt the evil-doing of a camorra of political thieves with machine guns, or to extend the masculine standard of morals to women. His chief complaint against the trusts is that they are “anarchistic.” By this he means that they accomplish successfully, by straightforward and intelligent means, the things that the average man is unable to accomplish by his clumsy and stupid means.

To the same class belong many offenses which carry us somewhat deeper

into the congenital Puritanism of the American. Call them acts of joy and you have described them pretty accurately. The American views joy with unscotchable suspicion, whatever its visible form: his attitude toward it, in general, is exactly opposite to that of the Periclean Greek. Some of its agents, true enough, have wormed themselves, after a fashion, into his reluctant affections—the theater and the dance may serve as examples—but he is still full of a vague feeling that the devil sent them, he is still disposed to apologize for them. When he flings his legs in air, it is by no means in innocence, but with a full sense that the act is subtly lascivious; that it will lay him up no stores in heaven. In principle, indeed, he is wholly against dancing, as he is against card playing and wine-bibbing, and the largest of his native religious sects specifically prohibits all three. Unable, by a defect of the imagination, to penetrate to their spiritual uses or to apprehend the joy they symbolize as a thing in itself, he sees only their element of carnality, and so he feels uncomfortably wicked every time he yields. In the theater his conscience is always with him, sitting sepulchrally at his side and favoring him with a clammy smack ever and anon. The result is a constant effort to stave it off, to placate it, to compromise with it. That is to say, his choice is ever for plays that tickle it at least as much as they outrage it—plays that end safely upon some sonorous and preposterous platitude—plays teaching the general doctrine that virtue is not only possible in this life, but even profitable and agreeable. If the American shows a willingness, now and then, to venture a rod or two into the moral Bad Lands, it is only because of the excuse it gives him for an affecting rush back. He will stand for a play in which John Doe casts a libidinous eye upon Mrs. Richard Roe, but not for a play in which John gets away with it. No, there must be a sad finish for John, and a reconciliation between Mrs. Roe and Richard. And, as a rule, the American feels that even this small toleration of immorality is rather too much. He greatly prefers, indeed, a

play in which John picks a virgin for his dalliance, and in which the virgin remains in that blessed state until after the final curtain. In brief, he insists upon what he calls a happy ending.

All sports except baseball are held to be immoral by the American. He may go to see a horse race or a boxing match once in a while, just as he may play poker or view a hoochee-coochee dance or get drunk, but always there will be protests from his conscience. Such diversions, and fox hunting and joy riding with them, are on his roster of iniquities, and he would not dare to yield to any of them if he thought he were going to die next week. The persons who patronize them habitually constitute a recognized and abhorrent caste of sinners: the follower of horses or of royal flushes is just as sure to go to hell as the follower of skirts. Baseball escapes from this general ban for two reasons: the first is that its essential immorality, as an expression of joy, is covered up by its stimulation of a childish and orgiastic local pride, a typically American weakness, and the second of which, flowing from the first, is that it offers an admirable escape for that bad sportsmanship and savage bloodlust which appear in all the rest of the American's diversions. An American crowd does not go to a baseball game to see a fair and honest contest, but to see the visiting club walloped and humiliated. If the home club can't achieve the walloping unaided, the crowd helps—usually by means no worse than mocking and reviling, but sometimes with fists and beer bottles. And if, even then, the home club is drubbed, it becomes the butt itself, and is lambasted even more brutally than the visitors. The thirst of the crowd is for victims, and if it can't get them in one way it will get them in another.

This hot yearning to rowl and punish someone—preferably a sinner, but failing that, anyone handy—is one of the distinguishing marks of the American. The energies which the Germans put into bacchanalian and military enterprise, and the English into idle sport and vapid charity, are chiefly devoted, in this fair land, to moral endeavor, and

particularly to punitive moral endeavor. The nation is forever in the throes of loud, barbaric campaigns against this sin or that. It is difficult to think of a human act that has not been denounced and combated at some time or other. Thousands of self-consecrated archangels go roaring from one end of the country to the other, raising the *posse comitatus* against the Rum Demon, or cocaine, or the hobble skirt, or Mormonism, or the cigarette, or horse racing, or bucket shops, or vivisection, or divorce, or the army canteen, or profanity, or race suicide, or moving picture shows, or graft, or the negro, or the trusts, or Sunday recreations, or dance halls, or child labor. The management of such crusades is a well organized and highly remunerative business: it enlists a great multitude of snide preachers and unsuccessful lawyers, and converts them into public characters of the first eminence. Candidates for public office are forced to join in the bellowing; objectors are crushed with accusations of personal guilt; inquisitorial and unconstitutional laws are put upon the statute books; the courts, always so flabby under a democracy, are bullied into complaisance. In the large cities, of course, there is considerable opposition to these puritanical frenzies, if only on the ground that they hurt trade, but the laws of most American cities, it must be remembered, are not made by their citizens but by peasant legislators from the country districts, and no protest can ever prevail against the rural madness for chemical purity.

Such donkeyish enactments, of course, do not actually put down the sins they are aimed at. Their one certain effect, indeed, is quite the contrary: they reinforce mere immorality with positive crime. Thus, in New York City, the effect of prohibiting prostitution, a wholly ineradicable evil, has been to convert it into a mammoth and predatory business, with thousands of petty politicians fattening upon it; and the effect of the unenforceable laws against gambling has been to turn the police into blackmailers. But this inevitable failure doesn't daunt the moral American. The way he gets his fun is not by stamp-

ing out sin, but by giving chase to sinners. He likes to catch a few of them now and then and put them to the torture—but it would give him bitter disappointment if they all came in and surrendered. Prohibition, a typically American imbecility, is kept alive by the very fact that it won't work. Its appeal lies almost wholly in the endless sport it affords. First there is the fun of prohibiting the chief solace and recreation of a horde of protesting sinners, and then there is the fun of hunting down all those who refuse to come over to well water—*i. e.*, about 99.99 per cent. There is just as much drunkenness in a dry town as in a wet town, and sometimes even more—but there is also more moral excitement. The constant raids and denunciations thrill the pure heart. There is infinite opportunity for exhilarating, spying, threatening, roweling, punishing. The liquor seller who was a licensed merchant yesterday “and felony for to shoot,” is now an outlaw, a fugitive from justice, *feræ naturæ*. The breeding and pursuit of such game is the national sport of the American.

The same ferocious impulse is at the bottom of most of the “anti-ring” and “reform” movements which periodically rack American cities. For grafting, in itself, the American has only a theoretical horror, just as he has only a theoretical horror of drunkenness. Whether in public office or in private office, he is commonly a grafter himself, at least in a modest way, and what is more, the fact is universally recognized and taken into account. The cash register is omnipresent in the United States—and for a reason. In no other land in Christendom is the bonding business one-fifth as prosperous. Nowhere else are the public service corporations—such as street car and gas companies, for example—put to greater ingenuity to protect themselves from their customers. But this petty dishonesty—the natural fruit, perhaps, of the hypocrisies engendered by the national Puritanism—does not interfere with the rapturous chase of grafters of more heroic cut. Let but a newspaper announce solemnly that a given public official is taking bribes—a

fact already known, or at least strongly suspected, by every reasonable man in the community—and at once the mob is up in arms, and a rousing hunt has begun. Loud demands are made that the trial of the accused be rushed, that he be jailed as quickly as possible, that he be given the maximum sentence under the law. All persons who appear in his behalf, if only to plead for his plain rights, are denounced as accomplices and scoundrels. The whole population yells for his gore; the racial bloodlust demands an immediate victim. But once he is safely behind the bars, once the chase is over, all interest in it dries up. A year or so later the felon is turned out. Sentimentality now rescues him, as savagery once condemned him.

Here we come at last (and it is high time, for these papers must be short) upon the second of the two classes of sins mentioned two or three pages back—that is to say, the sins which the man of average talents can commit without serious risk of being found out. This sin of grafting is a shining example: it is almost always possible, as the vernacular has it, to get away with the goods. Probably the majority of all American public officials, federal, state or municipal, may be “reached” with more or less ease, but not one in a thousand is ever caught and punished. And in private life the ratio of the guilty to the convicted is certainly no larger. (How many men are ever jailed for beating the street cars? Or for using lead nickels in slot machines?) So it is perfectly safe for the American to arraign graft fiercely when a peculiarly inept practitioner is taken in the act: the more he bellows, indeed, the more he diverts suspicion from himself. And not only is it safe and profitable, but in addition, it is urged by a sort of subconscious psychological necessity, for, as Dr. Freud tells us, it is always our own salient weakness that we combat most violently. The wildest foes of the Rum Demons are drunkards under their skins; the Sunday school superintendent is a bad man to trust with orphans’ money; the most rigidly perfect table manners are found in persons whose childhood

meals were eaten in the kitchen and to the raucous music of father’s gurgitation. And the loudest excoriators of graft, perhaps, are those who know its snares too well.

But an even better example of the sin subterranean is adultery, an act punished in the United States by penalties unmatched in any other civilized land. All our moralists, however far they roam, come back to it soon or late. The wars upon cigarettes, bridge whist and peekaboo waists are passing madnenses; the war for the Seventh Commandment is with us always. It is the inspiration and foundation of innumerable laws, uncompromising, preposterous, unenforceable. It is the theme perpetual of all pious dervishes and rabble-rousers, tear-squeezers and mad mullahs. To be taken in adultery, dramatically, publicly, is to forfeit all qualification to public office under the republic. The simple accusation of a weeping woman, even of a weeping charwoman, might have ruined a Lincoln or a Grant. It *did* ruin—but I name no names! In nearly half the territorial area of the United States a man accused of one form of adultery becomes an outlaw *ipso facto*; he may be shot down without trial, and public opinion will applaud his slayer. And from end to end of the country, the woman who makes an open departure from the cold, straight path is practically expelled from the human race. There is no room in our national life for a George Sand, nor even for a George Eliot. Gorki the patriot and Gorki the artist were swallowed up instantaneously by Gorki the adulterer. Of the two chief questions that every immigrant must answer before he may enter the gates of the nation, one gives him plain notice that he must not shoot the President and the other gives him plain notice that he must not deny monogamy. Only once in our history has a whole State faced the penalty of disfranchisement for crime, and then it was for allowing polygamists to admit it.

But does all this show an unexampled purity of national character, a unique frenzy for virtue, a unanimous worship

of virginity? Is the American, then, the most chaste of living creatures? Is he a frigid, ascetic archangel, remote from all the low passions and appetites of the brute? Alas, I fear I cannot tell you that he is! I wish I could, but I can't—and he isn't. On the contrary, he is one of the lustiest rogues in all Christendom, a fellow grievously over-sexed, the constant victim of his own fevers, a natural adventurer in amour. All his so-called chivalry, indeed, is no more than evidence of one of his projecting defects: his inability, to wit, to think of women save as servitors to his uses. It is costing him great effort to acquire a more complex view of them; he is still somewhat scandalized whenever they show intelligence and individuality. He would much prefer them to remain his simple property—his cherished, coddled, well defended property, perhaps, but still unmistakably his property. The things he asks of them in return for that jealous cherishing are services almost purely sexual: he wants them to be assiduous wives and willing mothers: it displeases him to picture them in any other role. This view, of course, reacts viciously upon the women themselves. There is no land in which the holding out of the sexual lure is less covered up by artificialities and disguises. The American girl is turned loose upon the reluctant male at seventeen, and she practises her frank magic until she is long past forty. Scarcely a single restraint is upon her; no crippling conventions hamper her dis-

play of goods; she is free to snare a man however she may.

And in a score of less open and innocent ways the crude sexuality of the American makes itself evident. His cities reek with prostitution; his newspapers devote enormous space to matters of amour; his one permanent intellectual exercise is the exchange of obscene and witless anecdotes. Recognizing this weakness himself, he makes elaborate efforts to armor himself against it. No other civilized white man is so full of hypocritical pruderies. He is afraid of all "suggestion," as he calls it, in books, pictures and plays. He cannot look at a nude statue innocently; he cannot even imagine a nude woman innocently. Words and images that have no more effect upon a German or a Frenchman than the multiplication table are subtly salacious to the American, and lead him into evil. He is forbidden to kiss his girl in the public parks because he cannot be trusted to stop at kissing. His laws solemnly proscribe, as incitements to debauchery, the very weapons that professional moralists aim at—for example, the report of the Chicago Vice Commission. The ordinances of all his large cities embody a specific denial that he has kidneys; he is afraid to face squarely the commonplaces of physiology. A man eternally tortured by the animal within him, a man forever yielding to brute passion and instinct, his one abiding fear is that he may be mistaken for a mammal.



LYRIC

By Gerald Dinwiddie

PALE roses in your hair I wound, one silver twilight hour—
Pale, yellow roses we had found in the thrush's dreamwood bower.

And round your heart my dreams I twined, and prayed that ever there
They might remain, though death would find the roses in your hair.

DAPHNE

By Bliss Carman

THROUGH the shadowy aisles I flee
From the ardor of the sun;
Straining throat and trembling knee
Scarce can bear me farther on.

Great Selene, kind and cold,
Hide me in thy silver light
Of enchantment, fold on fold,
Lest I perish in affright!

Mother of the frail in heart,
To thy forest I am come.
Let the tender branches part,
And their twilight take me home.

Let my wilding bed be made
By a mossy beech tree bole,
Deep within its healing shade.
Soon, come soon, that saving goal!

Speak, oh, speak the mighty ban,
And thy spell about me shed!
Faster reels the darkening span.
Fiercer burns the nameless dread.

Ah, thy breath begins to cool
All my beauty with its balm!
Here beside the darkling pool,
(Like thy beam within its calm,)

I who Daphne was of yore,
Changed by thy mysterious might,
Now am Laurel evermore,
Gleaming through the tranquil night.



WOMEN feel a certain proprietorship in all dissipated men.

THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T GO WRONG

By Albert Payson Terhune

RAEGAN told it to me. For a short, happy space in his mottled career, Raegan had been a settlement worker. But someone in charge was so base as to accuse him of a greater interest in the working than in the settlement. And he had departed—with a grievance and several more negotiable mementoes.

It was during the "Minimum Wage for Working Girls" legislation that I ran across Raegan. What or whom he was doing at the Capital I never clearly knew. I had a fine idea for an epigram which, if I could whittle it into scintillant, mordant keenness, I intended to embody somewhere in my wage story.

It was to the effect that the same low pay scale which keeps girls from being respectable keeps men from being anything else.

I rather fancied this statement of a double standard in the relation of poverty to goodness. And, in the first glow of inspiration, I repeated it to Raegan. Of course he did not grasp the idea. And when I put it in more and simpler words he flatly contradicted me. The fact that my pretty catch phrase could be proven untrue pleased me immensely. For it proved the thing an epigram.

I told Raegan so. But, perhaps thinking I was arguing the case, he undertook at some length to prove me wrong. Then, by way of illustration, he told me the following tale—gleaned during his brief, bright settlement experience. I do not vouch for it. Nor do I wholly know what it proves. But this

I do know: it proves *something*. That is not an effort to be funny, but the statement of a solemn certainty. And wiser folk than I are at liberty to find the proof.

No (began Raegan), you're dead wrong when you spring that puzzle picture speech about girls finding it hard to live up to their Elsie books just because they're broke. Often as not, they find it harder to do anything different. Being broke is the very thing that keeps them in line. And Maudie Kirk's case cinches that.

There're two halves to Maudie's story. The first half reads like all the dreary, Heaven-Will-Protect-the-Working-Goil wheezes ever ground out. The second half isn't quite like anything else I've happened to run across.

Maudie came to New York from one of the "small time" towns that have names like a Roman general and populations like a road company Roman mob. I don't remember just what line of honest endeavor her father had chased. But there's no doubt he *was* honest. For he died, leaving a bedridden widow and Maudie and—after the M.D. and M.A. (why, Mortuary Assistant, of course) had taken theirs—about a hundred dollars.

That meant the bell had rung for Maudie to listen to the factory whistle. And, being a dutiful kid, she listened. There was no chance, up in her own bailiwick. So she hearkened to the call of the city. There were jobs to be had in New York. And a girl could live here on almost nothing, if she knew the

right sort of food and clothes—and let them alone.

And she could send all her spare savings up-State to pay board for Mother, who was deposited at Uncle Barney's, on the Pompton road, at three fifty a week. Some money, in those parts, I'm told!

So Maudie came to New York. She was no fluff skulled Maid of Yaphank, to be lured or otherwise pleasurably excited by the hidden perils of the Big City. Not she. She knew what to steer clear of and why to steer clear of it. She was a good girl, clear down to her number six soles. And level-headed. And equipped with an 1840 New England conscience. Why, on form alone, you could have backed Maudie to go around the track six times without leaning over the rail once to crop any infield grass.

"I know what the city is," she told her mother, as she finished brailing the telescope bag and double-reefed the ancestral umbrella. "And I know the traps it holds for fools. I know, too, that a good, sensible, self-respecting girl can always make her way anywhere. So don't worry your precious old self about me."

Good talk, what?

So to New York came Maudie. And what's more, she got a job—after a while. It was in the basement (plus two) of a department store. The section that never is intruded on by Customers, Daylight or Real Air. And they paid her \$5.50, as a starter. Just for pottering around pretty steadily from eight to six thirty, with very near twenty whole minutes off for lunch—sometimes.

Part of the while she was able to send home the three fifty a week for Mother's board. And part of the time she did it, anyway, by working overtime. You see, it was one of those generous stores that allow their girls overtime pay, except at the busy season.

Well, for a couple of months or so Maudie was pretty near as happy and carefree as a blind mule on a treadmill. Then there was a cut-down. And the bulk of the new girls were let out. Maudie was among the bulk. And by

this time she'd trained off a whole lot of loose flesh that she didn't need.

But, bless you, even when her first landlady locked the door on her and lost the key, Maudie was as plucky as ever. And just as dead sure as ever that a good, self-respecting girl could win her way along the straight road—even if there were a few stray bumps therein, to keep the liver from getting torpid.

Next, after a kind of long stage wait, she got her chance in a steam laundry, at six per. No overtime. But she scalded her face and arms pretty badly one day in a steam escape. And by the time she got back from the hospital the laundry people had decided she was a hoodoo, and wouldn't take her on again.

Through the Y. W. C. A. (where she used to get weekly thrills by listening to those startling lectures on "Child Widows of India," and "How to Tell the Wild Flowers from the Birds") she annexed a nice general-housework job in a family of nine that kept boarders. The mistress was the grandniece, by marriage, of Simon Legree. She paid Maudie fourteen dollars a month and kept her from taking on fat. But Maudie fainted one day, when there was company. And she was fired. You see, they wanted a strong girl.

Did she lose her faith in that splendid Self-Respect wheeze? She did not. She still shut her eyes and her ears to the Easiest Way and stopped eating for a while; and then landed a fine position in a sweatshop.

She lasted for nearly five months. Then the girls "walked out," she at their head. One of the papers called her a Joan of Arc and printed a snapshot of her. The other girls got back. Maudie didn't.

Being a member of the Arc family isn't on the free list.

Then came a spell when there was no work. At least none for Maudie. The day that the last member of the Dollar Family quitted lodging with her a letter came from Uncle Barney. It said, among a lot of other demonstrative things, that Mother's board money must be paid up in full or the old lady must get out.

There was a poorhouse handy, went on Uncle Barney, with his inimitable dry wit, and he wouldn't grudge giving Mother a free drive there. He enclosed the doctor's bill for \$98.60. And at the bottom the big-hearted old family physician had scrawled a line to the effect that he'd pay no more calls till a full settlement was forthcoming. Uncle Barney's love letter wound up by mentioning that Mother was some worse.

The letter got to Maudie Kirk on Christmas evening, early.

She read it all through a couple of times. Then she read again what the doctor had to say. After that, she crossed her room (one step did it) to the looking glass. The glass showed back about the sorriest-looking hall-bedroom in the City of Hallrooms. The landlady had been soft-hearted, because Christmas was near, and she had told Maudie she needn't get out till New Year's.

Well, over to the glass went Maudie. It was a flawed glass at that. But it served her all right as an audience. She looked into it. And she began to speak, out loud, to the girl there.

"I've given it a fair trial," she said. "I came here strong in my faith that self-respect and willingness to work would carry a woman safe to success. I've slaved like a dog. And I've starved. I've given Decency all the chance it could want. I've lived as Mother would have wanted me to live. And I've suffered as she couldn't understand, if I told her. And what's come of it?"

"I can't get work. I can't get food. I can't get the money that will keep Mother out of the poorhouse. I can't get any of those things honestly and decently. If I was the only one concerned, I wouldn't care. But Mother is going to have a home and a doctor's services.

"*She's going to have them.* And I'm going to get them for her. I've read a lot about a girl not needing to go crooked just because she's poor. And it's a lie. A silly lie. I've tried the heaven path. And it's bumped me into a stone wall. Here's where I go to hell!"

And just as carefully and as honestly

as she had toiled heavenward, she set out to trip the Short-Cut, Down-Grade route. She planned it all out. But she overlooked one bet. She'd been too busy orating at herself in the glass to pay any sort of notice to what that same glass had to say in come-back. If she had, she might—or she mightn't—have noticed a few things:

First, that ten months of systematic starving had taken everything off her body but the bones; and had tried to square itself by making those twice as large. Second, that the eyes had gone hollow. Not with dark, fancy shadows, but with a burnt-hole-in-a-blanket effect.

Likewise her face was greasy and so was her hair. Hers was mouse-colored hair at best, and it had got thin and stringy and it was strained back. The only dress she had left was greas-spotted and shiny and darned. It had never been anything that Worth or Paquin would have thrown a fit over. And now it had lost whatever it had started with. Her shoes, too—well, never mind her shoes. And she had no gloves. Her hat, by the way, wasn't much the better for about forty rains that had landed on it since she had hocked the family umbrella.

Yes, sir, that was the general blue print front elevation of the damsel that had set out to go wrong. But off she started. She had pluck.

She sneaked out of her boarding house, and hit Broadway about eight o'clock. There's apt to be several people around at that hour of the evening. 'Specially Christmas night.

Maudie was resolved on her Hades trip, all right. But she didn't quite know the road. So up Broadway she started. She'd always scuttled along the streets like a scared little hen, with her eyes fixed, purely, on her feet, ever since she had struck New York. But tonight she acted up real brazen. She walked slow along the Big Blonde Path, eyes high, manner heroic and her heart hammering up in her poor thin throat.

From Thirtieth Street to Fiftieth she strolled. Then back again as far as Fortieth. Nothing happened. Just nothing at all. She couldn't under-

stand. She'd heard about girls who walked Broadway. She'd just walked it. And she might as well have been stepping down to the store from Uncle Barney's house.

Something was wrong, somewhere. She couldn't guess what, till she saw a squab just in front of her drift dreamily alongside a fat man who looked as if his name belonged on a Rhine Wine List, and say something to him as she passed. Maudie could only catch the word "dear." It sounded rather free-and-easy for a total stranger. But it seemed to be the thing to do.

So up to a dapper little fur-coated man sidled Maudie. She tried to say "Dear," too. But the word stuck. The man looked at her, kind of cross. Then he grunted:

"This is Panhandleville all right. Fifth touch in six blocks. Oh, well, it's Christmas!"

And he flipped her a dime. Maudie gathered it up. Dimes had a market value, even if souls hadn't. Then she stood looking after him, all choked and white. He'd taken her for a beggar. Not for a Seductive Delilah at all. But just for a Christmas Night beggar.

Next time there was no chance for any mistake like that. She said "Dear," to the red-faced clubman who lurched toward her out of a side canyon. She said it right out loud. Pretty near hollered it. He stopped dead short with his mouth open. Maudie backed away a bit. She didn't know what was the next thing to say. Besides, he reeked of booze. But she got fresh hold of her courage and said "Dear" again. She said it the way McGraw coaches the runner on third.

The man let out a roar of laughter.

"Oh, if the boys could see!" he sniggered, hopeless-like. "And they'll never believe me! On Broadway, too!"

He hailed a taxi and rolled aboard it, still roaring. Maudie took a kind of bashful step toward the taxi. But he howled to the meter brigand to put on double speed, and slammed the door.

The next man told her to go get a new face. The next said the Scarecrows' Home ought to keep earlier closing hours.

And so on, all the way down the line. It was raining, too. Once a cop saw her at work and he laughed himself sick. You see, the happy Christmas spirit was abroad.

The only job that is supposed to pay the amateur better than the professional followed the example of all the other jobs Maudie Kirk had looked for. Gee, but it must have been tough for a girl, with Maudie's conscience, to cut loose and turn her back on all she held holy—and then be refused the chance of profit by it. As if when old Faust offered to swap his soul, the red basso devil had carolled, "Nothing doing!"

A night's sleep gave her some new courage. And she made up her mind to try again. Women of That Kind wore ropes of gems and rode in limousines and had the sort of flat they call "Bijou"—whatever that means. Maudie had read so. Also, the wicked city was swarming with men who were eager to prey on defenseless womanhood. She'd read that, too. So she couldn't see where she'd failed.

She hadn't read—because nobody's yet had sense or nerve enough to write it—that the average plain working girl has about as many temptations in New York as she has on a desert island. And that at best—or worst—such a girl's unlawful earnings wouldn't keep her in carfare. But where's the living girl who doesn't snuggle to her heart the belief that she could rake in a fortune if only she chose to be wicked? And, after all, Glass is as precious as Diamonds—until one tries to sell it.

Maudie planned a new angle of attack. There is a famous "Red-Haired Siren" whose lures captivate Wall Street and who is by now richer than John D.

Poor Maudie had heard about her. Everybody has heard about her. Except perhaps Wall Street.

The Street was screaming next day over a story that nobody really believed. A story about a thin, ragged-looking wreck of a woman—most likely batty—who had managed to get past the sleepy door guard into old Cyrus Q. Spillaker's private office and had stammeringly hailed the old geezer as "Dear"—just

before the whole working office staff had industriously run her out.

Well, it took Maudie Kirk just two days to learn—she was no fool—that she could no more go to hell than she could to Mars. Morally, she was a goner. For she'd said good-bye to Goodness and Decency and Conscience. Said good-bye to them, out loud, in front of her looking glass. But she'd never since had a chance to make that farewell anything but a solo. And she knew now that she never could.

That was about dusk, two days after Christmas.

A couple of hours later, a tug captain off East Twenty-sixth Street boathooked a bunch of sleazy clothes that had just hopped off the dock with a starved woman inside of them.

Maudie couldn't even score a success as a drowner. The captain lugged her to Bellevue, and pretty soon she came around and began to eat. She had a few months' arrears of food to make up. And she sure did her best at it.

You know young Galahad Templar? Sure you do. He runs the Settlement. He has all the cash that's fit to coin. And he spends it on the Uplift of his fellow man and woman. Fits up the Settlement gallery with pre-cubist pictures to elevate their souls, and has long-haired woplets from the Metropolitan and Carnegie Hall come down

once a week to show them how Tschai-kowsky really ought to be rendered. It's a big help to East Siders with rabbit families, I can tell you. Why, lots of them can tell a Corot from a Greuze and the "Largo" from Raff's "Spring Song."

Well, Templar happened to be on his monthly philanthropic butt-in at Bellevue when Maudie Kirk was brought there. He got interested in as much of her story as she could tell him between eats (we got the whole of it from her later at the Settlement), and he pulled wires to have her ambulated over to his Settlement House.

Say, it was a miracle what a few weeks of rest and real food and warm clothes and a few dozen baths and shampoos did to that girl's appearance. And when she was all well again and plump and kind of pretty and winsome, Templar paid her mother's bills and found her a fine easy fifteen-a-week job in the office of one of his chums. She'd got a fair start at last, poor kid!

Did she hang onto *that* job? I'm sorry you had to ask such a question. And I'm pained, something terrible, to say she didn't. Templar was so proud of his work of reformation that he—well, last time I heard of them, he'd gotten her a nice comfortable little morganatic flat uptown, somewhere, near the park. The sort of flat they call "Bijou"—whatever that means.



THE MONKS AT CHOIR TIME

By Florence Wilkinson

THE cloistral shadows streamed away,
 As, out at sea,
 The sunset makes a luminous ford—
 Thus the great transept window poured
 Its rose red reverry.

They came like galleys, set full sail,
 Black ships afeared,
 That swam the twilight, one by one,
 Blew toward the mystic setting sun
 And disappeared.

HIS RELAPSE

By André Tridon

HE finally made up his mind to break the news to her. It would be less brutal than letting her read about it in the morning paper.

At the close of the market, after a week's silence, he asked her to meet him in Morningside Park. Passers-by would compel her to lower her voice and control herself if peradventure she . . . And in the open he would not be at the mercy of his own impulses. . . .

She took things surprisingly well; of course she blurted out a few utterly absurd threats which she herself characterized as absurd a while later. He felt so relieved that it cost him a decided effort to assume the proper end-of-all-things expression; somehow, by recalling sentimental bits from recent fiction and drama, he succeeded in raising a discreet moisture to his lids. She noticed the moisture and also how little it harmonized with his short, square nose and his hard chin. Pale as she was she seemed to him somewhat aged; in the shade of the trees her auburn hair looked quite dark; freckles on her nostrils annoyed him considerably. . . . He left her with an abruptness which mimicked well genuine despair, fate-cursing wrath. The wearied gesture of her hand expressed many things of which she was not thinking. . . . She thought of them afterward. . . . Weeks would be like this last week. . . . Waiting at afternoon ends for a 'phone ring, for the crooned entreaty which thrilled her even now after two years, and which she never denied . . .

He jumped on an Amsterdam Avenue car; the tantalizing headlines of his neighbor's paper obliterated all thought

in him . . . all thought except of that BIG FIRE IN BROOKLYN. At Seventy-second Street he rushed to the platform to buy the tantalizing sheet from a howling urchin . . . and there she stood, a transfer in hand, waiting for a car. . . . She couldn't see him, for her back was partly turned to him. . . . She looked extremely natural . . . color had returned, at least to the cheek he saw. . . . A well dressed man of thirty-five or so was watching her attentively. . . . She did not seem to be unaware of that scrutiny. . . . She hastened toward an oncoming car. . . . The man followed. . . . "Tenth Avenue only." . . . She retreated. . . . So did the man. . . . Of course she never meant what she threatened to do . . . to throw herself into the arms of the first man. . . . That first man, he had visualized him as a little bald, with a weak face and bad front teeth. . . . But now this refined-looking fellow . . . and the sun was shining on her hair and her creamy neck . . . and that lithe figure in the close fitting purple skirt . . . what an idiot he had been to insist on meeting her in a park. . . . The conductor clanged two bells . . . the wheels ground the rails . . . he jumped off, walked up to her, put his arm under hers, called a taxicab, whispered the address. . . .

"Did you follow me, dearest?"

"Why, sweetheart . . ." And he eschewed both an awkward truth and an awkward lie by crushing her lips under his. . . .

When he regained his breath he muttered:

"I simply couldn't bear the thought!"

Her misinterpretation of this remark made her heart overflow with happiness.

LIFE'S FUTILITY

By Helen Davies

FOR the past twenty-four hours snow had been falling heavily, but it ceased at sunset. And now, several hours later, the moon peered occasionally from the swiftly moving clouds, throwing fantastic shadows on a whiteness as firm as the frosting on a cake. The piercing north wind whipped trees and bushes until they emitted melancholy grating sounds. Icicles of varying forms clung to every projecting eave and window ledge of the farmhouse, and a solid mass had frozen from the pump spout to the watering trough.

But inside the kitchen the fire leaped as though animated by a living impulse to dominate the outer desolation. Its light fell on the dresser filled with willow ware and pewter cups and dishes; over the yellow painted floor and binded rag rug; over the strong face and work-stained hands of the man sitting by a kerosene lamp, reading the *Essex Chronicle*.

He was about fifty years of age; tall, but with the habitual stoop of one absorbed in watching the growth of small plants. His lips were resolutely compressed, his small eyes almost hidden under bushy brows, his head covered with heavy, grizzled hair.

As he read, he constantly bent forward and paused, listening intently to sounds from a room overhead: hasty footsteps, muffled cries, followed by a piercing scream. The newspaper fell to the floor as he rose to his feet, striking the table with a clenched fist, which made the lamp leap and the flame dart above the chimney. He exclaimed: "God, that I should 'ave lived to see this day!"

As the words left his lips, the door

opened slowly, letting in such a draught of cold air that he cried irritably: "Come in, woman, come in. One would think ye didn't know the ways of your own house, to stand fumblin' at the lock, for all the world like a two-year-old."

The newcomer advanced hesitatingly. She was a middle-aged woman, with the sunken breast and flat hip of the over-worked. Her scanty gray hair was combed back from a face faded with indeterminateness. Her dim blue eyes were timidly appealing; her chin quivered in a piteous effort for composure as she dragged more closely round her bowed shoulders a knitted gray yarn shawl.

The man looked at her interrogatively; then, as she didn't speak, a deep flush rose in his face, as he said harshly and bitterly: "To think I'd 'ave lived to see this day! A daughter of mine givin' birth to a bastard. A child what I've saved for—scraped and pinched belly and back that she might have an eddication and somewhat when I'm dead and gone. And what's my reward? To have her drag my honest name in the dust—make me, Ezra Baldwin, what's allus held up my head and looked folks in the face, ashamed to go to meetin' or to follow the heifers to market!"

"You had the chance to make her an honest woman," said his wife irresolutely.

The man turned on her in such a fury that he actually stuttered with rage. "You dare to twit me for not givin' my cash to a wastrel! I know Martin Hone's got the girl into trouble to force me to support them. He's been an idler and a drunkard since he was big enough to lift a pint of beer. What Marah seen in him passes my compre-

hension. She's a fool caught with a word and a look, like a fly taken with a bit of sticky paper. And," with increasing vehemence, "there's you, my wife what shared my bed and board and helped me to lay one cent to another, urgin' me, till I've no peace, day nor night, to give my money to that loafer!"

The woman raised her timid eyes. "Ezra," she exclaimed, "you're a hard 'un. Marah's your child, and ye shouldn't grudge the price to get her right in the eyes of the world, and to give the child what's comin' a name. If she went wrong—" The woman choked, adding resolutely: "I will say it, if you strike me dead for it; it was 'cause you was that hard, grudgin' her every innocent bit of fun. Never a cent to buy a yard of ribbon or a trinket, or a day off for a picnic. 'Twas nothin' but work, work, pickin' berries till her back ached, washin' dishes in hayin' times when the men was here till her hands was sore. Many a time I've cried over them poor little rough palms that you, her father, never even thought on. Lor', I'm broke in, used to work, but she was young, fresh and fair as a daisy; and sure as my name's Naomi, you, her father, druv her to sin. Martin Hone was the first to smile at her and say she was pretty. I don't wonder he won her heart. I ain't excusing the wrongdoin', but I can understand how she slipped into it, not rightly knowin', along of lovin' and bein' a woman. There," she concluded defiantly, "I had my say, and feel better for it. It's been workin' in me day and night, and had to get out."

Ezra's face grew darker and darker, as astonishment and rage were mirrored on it at the revolt of his faithful subject. "That I'd live to hear such talk in my own house, from you!" he commenced in wrathful indignation, but a louder cry rang from the upper room and Naomi instantly turned and ran, leaving Ezra standing stupefied, his mouth open for further speech, while the cries from above were rapidly changing their character, becoming more shrill, then following each other in rapid succession, like the howls of a beast in torture, then suddenly ceasing altogether, to be suc-

ceeded by that unmistakable wail with which the newly born proclaims its reluctant advent.

Ezra's face changed as he listened; then, turning, he tramped up and down the floor with a heavy tread which shook the house. Walking to the window, he pulled up the shade and looked out at the clear, cold starlight, then resolutely poked the fire, turned up the wick of the lamp roughly, and lowered it with a muttered exclamation as it smoked furiously; then he searched for his pipe on the mantel, and cramming it full of tobacco, had just resumed his chair when again the door opened and his wife reappeared, holding closely clasped in her arms what appeared to be a bundle of flannel. Excitement had brought a faint color to her cheeks and a light in her dim eyes, as she cried eagerly: "Ezra, Ezra, it's a girl! As much like Marah as two peas!"

The man rose heavily to his feet, saying slowly, without a glance at the bundle: "I'm goin' to fetch old Bess. She's been stampin' most through the barn floor; reckon she's as tired as I be of waitin'. Is the"—he choked—"wrapt up warm? It's a mortal cold night, and it's quite a step down to Widow Jones who promises to care for it."

"Ezra, Ezra!" cried his wife, tears springing to her eyes and rolling down her face. "For God's sake, sure you're not that hard! 'Twould be murder to take a newborn babe out on a night like this. I know you said you wouldn't have it here, and you only let Marah bide on condition she'd give it up; but I never thought ye really meant what ye said."

"We've lived together nigh on thirty years," replied Ezra slowly. "In all that time did ye ever know me do aught but what I said I would? No harlot's brat shall bide here where God-fearing folk have always lived."

"Then the curse of murder will rest on your soul," interposed Naomi desperately, hugging the bundle so closely to her breast that it emitted a feeble cry. "Pretty," she exclaimed, "did I hurt ye? Did I hurt ye?" And, moved by sudden panic, drawing closer to the fire,

she flung back the flannel covering the face of the newly born, exposing to the light the blinking eyes, the groping, twitching mouth, the little head covered with down.

Impelled by some overmastering impulse, Ezra drew nearer, and stared at the tiny face.

Naomi held her breath, fearing to jar upon his mood, but as she waited tremulously, a semblance of a smile wavered over the infant's lips, and unbelieving, quick with gratitude she heard the stern voice say slowly, as though seeking to condone its leniency: "'Tis a mortal cold night. Let the child bide here till tomorrow."

II

NAOMI always felt that it was owing to a special interposition of Providence that for a week the intense cold never broke. Cattle died, chickens were frozen beside the old hens; but what at any other time would have been a grief to her thrifty instincts was now obliterated by the knowledge that the child was temporarily hers to love and to caress. She struggled hard to keep it quiet, that its cries might not rouse Ezra with realization of its presence. Her daughter lay apathetically crushed by weakness and consciousness of shame into a hopeless, almost lifeless depression, rendering her impervious even to the child's demands. She never asked for it, gave no sign of recognition of its presence when from time to time Naomi laid it in her arms, her own instincts of motherhood so vicariously roused on its behalf that day by day the feeble, groping baby fingers clutched more and more firmly on her heartstrings.

At length Marah gained strength enough, on one fine sunny day, to creep slowly down to the kitchen and sit there, watching the sun on the scarlet geraniums in the south window, while idly wondering how her father would greet her, for she had not seen him since that never to be forgotten moment when, like a heavy hand, his contemptuous scorn had crushed her hope of being able, as

Martin's wife, to retrieve her position in the eyes of her world, and she started violently when the subject of her weary, endless thoughts suddenly stood before her.

"Martin!" she exclaimed feebly. "You—here!"

"Yes," he said slowly. "I wanted to see the child—our child, and make another effort to urge your father to give us something so that I can marry you and take you to Canada, where no one will know us and we can make a home and give the child a name. As it is, I haven't a cent more than will just pay my own way. I have got no one to help me. I feel like a sneak to leave you, but what can I do?"

He was boyishly young, with a fresh, irresolute face, a kindly, affectionate mouth, the index of a nature as easily influenced by good as evil.

The girl looked at him admiringly. She was momentarily beautiful in the adorable pallor of young motherhood. The violet shadows under her eyes made them tenderly appealing; her temples had grown slightly hollow; the corners of her lips drooped wistfully; her hands, refined by illness, were waxen white folded on the dark stuff of her gown. The man fell upon his knees and hid his face in it, as he moaned: "Life's mortal cruel—you to bear all the shame and suffering, and I not even able to be beside you. I never meant for to hurt you. I wanted you terribly bad, and like a fool I thought that it would give us a weapon to fight your father with; that when he knew, he'd be glad to let us marry. Who'd 'ave thought he'd be so hard, and you his only child? He can't take his money away with him when he dies. It will be yours then. Why can't we have a bit of it now?"

"I'll tell you *why*," answered an angry voice. Marah uttered a faint shriek. Martin sprang to his feet, seeing that Ezra had quietly entered the room, and now stood beside them, his work-stained hands clenching and unclenching, the cords swelling on his forehead, the big muscles standing out on his throat and on the hairy chest exposed by his unbuttoned shirt. His

keen eyes darkened with rage, as he stammered: "You're not satisfied with ruinin' my gal, but ye've come to persuade her to coax my silver from me, to throw it away on the likes of ye. By God, ye'll never get a cent of it! 'Twas all a plot, was it, 'twixt you and that hussy to force me to support ye? Well, ye over-reached yourselves. I tell ye, I'll see Marah lodged in jail as a common prostitute before I'll give a nickel to keep you from starvin'. Work—why can't ye work like other decent men before ye? I'll tell ye why—'cause this was easier."

Pausing, he suddenly thrust out and shook his hands in the other man's face. "Look at them," he vociferated. "They've scraped and piled one cent on another till they've all they can hold, and they'll keep what they've ained. By God, they'll keep it!"

"Father," cried the girl, tottering to her feet, "how can you be so hard? You were young once, and knew what love meant. Martin loved me. I loved him. I forgot everything else. It wasn't all his fault."

"Yes, I loved her," said Martin boldly, throwing his arm around the girl.

Ezra snorted contemptuously. "What does the likes of ye know of love? I tell ye, it's a bigger thing than a cravin' for woman's flesh. It means more than kisses and soft words. It means sufferin' till pain's pleasure. It means pinchin' back and belly and never even feelin' it, for the sake of the one ye love. It's sweatin', workin', eatin' the very bread of carefulness. That's my definition—but ye—all ye know of love is to take, not to give."

He paused, then turned peremptorily to the younger man. "I'll thank ye to get out of my kitchen, and never darken these doors again. I forbid ye the place. I forbid that gal of mine to hold converse with ye. I know ye'll not marry her without the cash—ye're not man enough for that."

Martin started, and flushed. "I can't take her to have her and the child starve. Give me a bit of land, the small farm at Dorking, and I'll work

my fingers to the bone to prove I'm in earnest."

Ezra laughed contemptuously. "Ye've gone a queer way to prove your worth and integrity. Give ye the farm at Dorking! I'd let the weeds grow knee high in the fields first and the barn roof rot. Maybe you'd be askin' me for my own land next. Get out of this and never let me see your face again, and take a thankful heart with you that I'm feedin' your paramour and your child. If I did the right thing I'd turn them out of doors." He raised his hand threateningly, but Martin, unheeding it, deliberately turned and kissed the pale, trembling girl.

"I done my best," he whispered agitatedly. "If I can get the silver any way at all, I don't care how, I'll be back to take you out of this."

One evening Ezra sat, according to nightly custom, reading his paper by the light of the lamp. The day's work was done; cows milked, the stable closed; the cat purred drowsily upon the mat before the fire. Marah had stolen away as speedily as the evening meal was over, and Naomi, with a murmured prayer that the child might sleep without waking and disturbing Ezra with its cries, brought her never emptied basket of mending to a corner of the table; not near enough to interfere with the man's prerogative of usurping the most comfortable place, and the best part of the light. The clock ticked busily; a log cracked and broke, sending out such a sudden shower of sparks that the cat retreated hastily to a safer corner; the paper rustled in Ezra's hand as he turned the sheet, then with a triumphant cry he crushed it in his hand. "Oh, what did I tell ye? What did I tell ye when ye thought I was hard for not givin' my darter to a wastrel?"

Naomi looked up inquiringly, the threaded needle suspended in one hand; the other trembled as it held a coarse yarn stocking.

"I was right," continued Ezra vindictively. "See, here it's all in print. Martin Hone's a thief. Caught red-handed tryin' to rob the post-office till.

Poor fool! He might 'ave known he couldn't succeed in anything he'd undertake. Now what do ye think of the man ye wanted for son-in-law? Whose judgment was right? Ye, and lots more like ye, think it's better for a child to have any kind of a name than none, but that's not my way of thinkin'—"

But Naomi interrupted scornfully. "Don't be flatterin' yourself that you've high and mighty principles. The truth is, you want to keep your silver. If Martin had had money, you'd never have said a word against his marryin' Marah. You'd have been glad to get rid of her. How will I ever tell her of this? She's never got back her strength, like she should. Poor, foolish fellow—he was desperate, and took a chance."

"You, to go justifyin' stealin'!" interposed Ezra in astonishment, looking over his spectacles at his wife, as though incredulous that he heard aright, then continuing meditatively: "'Pears like every gol-darned thing's my fault. Suppose next I'll be blamed 'cause old Gukie lost her calf." But Naomi was absorbed in her own thoughts.

"How can I tell her," she groaned—"when she sets all day never sayin' a word she can help, and never even seems to see the child! I believe she'd never put it to her breast unless I lifted and laid it in her arms. To think she was the brightest, gayest girl in this parish before this awful thing happened! Lor', what was that?" She sprang to her feet at the sound of a heavy fall, upsetting the basket, from which rolled reels of thread and balls of darning cotton which the cat promptly seized and tangled into inextricable confusion.

Ezra dropped his newspaper, and together man and wife ran out into the passage, to find Marah lying there, beside a broken glass from which the spilt milk was trickling toward the stream of blood issuing from her lips. With an inarticulate cry, Naomi flung herself on her knees, frantically chafing the cold hands with murmured words of tenderness and turning to Ezra, who, after an instant's hesitation, had lifted the unconscious girl, preparatory to carrying her upstairs. She exclaimed bitterly:

"It's all your fault."

"That's right," he retorted. "I've got to bear it all—from the girl's goin' wrong to Martin's shiftlessness and thievin', and not havin' gumption enough to get away. Well, talkin' won't mend hearts nor bodies neither. I'll lay Marah on her bed and go for the doctor."

Naomi loosened the girl's clothing, bathed her face and hands and had succeeded in restoring her to consciousness when her father returned with the doctor. As the two men entered the room, Marah, with sudden access of strength, raised herself, and with accusing finger and wild cry ejaculated: "It's his fault! Martin wouldn't have gone wrong, if he'd *given* us the silver!" Then, falling back, a stream of blood gushed from her throat and nostrils, and after a brief convulsive struggle, she ceased to breathe.

III

WINTER crept slowly forward on frozen, melting feet. The cold was intense. The snow fell relentlessly, day after day, heaping, drifting, spreading its desolating whiteness, until suddenly the yearly miracle was wrought. A mild wind blew from the south, the sun gained strength, and lo, from death sprang life, resurgent, beautiful. Even Naomi's sad heart momentarily forgot its pain, as the nameless child smiled in her face and with wavering fingers clutched at the bars of sunlight falling across the painted floor. Then as the days grew longer, warmer, she folded and laid an old quilt just outside the kitchen door where the sun shone the brightest, and often pursued her household tasks while the baby rolled, gurgling as it snatched at buttercup or dandelion in the grass beside it.

During all these weary months Ezra had never once mentioned the child nor noticed its presence, and one day Naomi's heart beat frantically as she saw him, coming slowly toward the house, stop, as he neared the child, and glancing furtively to see if he were observed, stand and look gravely at the little

creature, whose solemn blue eyes stared back at him, while the sun fell on the little round head covered with soft yellow curls, the same hue as the crushed dandelions in the tiny palm. As Ezra stood transfixed by some powerful emotion, the child, dropping its flowers, stretched out imploring hands, with low, plaintive sounds, and he, stooping to its level, extended a hard, grimy finger which was eagerly seized, and he lingered, until, gently disengaging himself, he passed around the corner of the house. From that moment he never omitted an opportunity of being with the child whenever he fancied himself unobserved; and Naomi, versed in woman's wiles, fostered his predilection by every simple device, though feigning not to notice it. The child, seeming to lend itself to this game with almost uncanny intelligence, learned to watch for his comings and goings, smiling to attract his attention, uttering inarticulate cries of welcome, toddling after him, clutching leg or finger in an effort to maintain an upright position; until finally, growing stronger with the passing months, it became his faithful attendant, though in Naomi's presence he appeared not to notice it.

At last, one cold fall evening, Ezra returned from work to find that Naomi was not in the kitchen; nor could he see the customary preparations for his evening meal. The fire was smoldering feebly, the kettle cold upon the hearth; the cat, mewing disconsolately, came toward him, rubbing against his leg with arching back and bristling tail. With more alertness than he would have considered possible, if he had paused to think, Ezra ran up the narrow creaking stairs, to find Naomi bending over the child where it lay in the crib, struggling for breath, looking strangely pinched and old, with heavy shadows under its closed eyes, its lips parched, its arms hanging straight by its sides.

Ezra, roughly pushing his wife aside, forgetful or oblivious of her presence, stooped awkwardly, muttering some familiar terms of endearment, which never before had failed to elicit instant response; but now the child, wrapt in its

enshrining cloak of suffering, lay oblivious of surrounding presences.

Ezra turned wrathfully. "Why don't ye do somethin'? What are mothers' instincts worth, if they can't help a little child to draw its breath? Why didn't ye call me? I'd have fetched the doctor long ago."

"I done all I could," responded Naomi hopelessly. "I wrung hot flannels for its chest, then I made a poultice, put its feet in boiling water and rubbed it with oil. What more could I do? As for callin' you from your work, I didn't dare. That's God's truth. How did I know you'd come, and you that hard—"

She paused, struck by the expression on her husband's face. "Me—hard?" he repeated incredulously, staring down at the tiny white face, his own working convulsively, as he gripped the rail of the crib so fiercely that his knuckles whitened in the effort. "Me—hard?" he repeated again. "Sure, ye ought to know I never was a great hand at showin' my feelin's." He added slowly: "I'll go for the doctor. Never mind about my supper, nor nothin'—" He paused, swallowed hard. "But the child," he achieved finally, with a gulp. Then, turning away: "I'll tell him to fetch another one, too, if he likes. There's money in it, if he saves the child."

"Money," retorted Naomi wearily—"what's the good of that? There was a time when it might have helped to make a girl happy, to save a life, but that chance has gone. It ain't ever comin' back."

Ezra had reached the door, but turned with his hand on the knob, saying slowly: "I reckon, in the bottom of your heart, you're thinkin' this my fault, too. Likely you're countin' back, like women do: 'If he'd let Marah marry, she'd have lived; then the child would have been watched more careful, and wouldn't have taken cold.' It's like the house Jack built."

Naomi sat blankly, her busy hands at rest, listening to the sound of that labored breathing whose continuance tore her heart, yet knowing its cessation

would be still more alarming. Suddenly she started, as the stairs creaked, wondering if it could be the longed-for doctor come so quickly, when she had failed to notice the sound of wheels. But why should the doctor hesitate, fumble furtively at the latch, partially push the door ajar, and peer in at the aperture? Whose voice was that which made her heart jump as it timidly whispered:

"Marah, Marah, are you there? The kitchen door was open, and no one about, so I crept up in the dark, hungerin' to see you, to hear your voice. I knew I'd find you with the child. Marah, Marah, where are you—for I cannot see."

"God, man!" cried Naomi in a hoarse whisper. "Are ye wild, to be here, and Ezra comin' any minute, and Marah—" She choked. "Ye ain't heerd?"

"Heard?" repeated Martin blankly, pushing into the room and standing before her haggard, unshaven, with torn clothing and bleeding hands. "I got out of jail," he whispered, "and cut myself. Can you find a rag and give me a bite to eat? I've been hiding all day in the woods afraid to come out till dark. But I couldn't go without seeing my girl and the kid before I made tracks for Canada. What's that noise?" he exclaimed, shrinking against the wall. "Sounds like the grating of a saw, same as that I made, last night, filing the bars. The child is sick." He moved gently and bent over the little form. "She don't look natural—but then I don't know much about babies. But where's Marah?" he reiterated.

Naomi groaned. "Oh," she exclaimed, "that I'd have to be the one to tell you! Marah's dead. Marah's dead and buried this six months." And she rocked to and fro, wringing her hands and sobbing wildly.

"Dead!" repeated Martin incredulously, staggering against the wall; then, in sudden revulsion: "It's all Ezra's fault! God's curses on him! If he'd been willing to give me just the least piece of land, we'd have been happy, man and wife; and now my girl's dead and I'm hunted like a mad dog, 'cause

I tried to steal, for her—it was for her!" And, covering his face with his scarred, bleeding hands, he sobbed aloud.

Naomi rose, and stooping over the child, readjusted the covers and moistened the dry lips with a drop of milk; then, turning to Martin, she whispered: "Have a care; I heerd the horse come in the gate. Ezra's gone for the doctor. Slip down to the pantry, while you got the chance, and help yourself to food. Stay, first let me bandage your poor, bleedin' hands, and tell you that in the old teapot on the second shelf you'll find ten dollars in small silver. It's mine, got sellin' eggs. *He* don't know I have it. I was savin' it for the child, what will never need it now. God knows, I wish it was more, for Marah loved you. And hearin' of your trouble was her death blow. When you've eat all you can, go out softly and hide in the woodshed, till Ezra's in bed and the doctor's gone. I'll slip out and tell you what he says about the child, but I'm afeerd it won't be comfortin', for it's sick, nigh death I think. Now go, go. I hear Ezra's step."

As the men entered the front door, Ezra said peremptorily: "Come in here, Doctor. I want a word with you before ye go up to see the child." As he spoke, he opened the door of a little room behind the kitchen where the old desk stood piled with catalogues of seeds and farming implements and paper bags containing samples of grain. He lit a lamp carefully with shaking hands, hunted in the drawer of the desk for a key, and finally opened a closet door and disclosed a small row of canvas bags standing on the shelf. "See them, Doctor?" he said significantly.

The doctor nodded acquiescence, wondering what this ceremonial portended. He was young, with pressing interests of his own, and impatient of delay, but Ezra was deliberately slow in all his movements.

"I am a man of my word," he began ponderously. "I wanted to show you these." He indicated the bags with a gesture. "That's the rent from Tarvey's; that's from little Dorking; that's

from Underhill's, paid quarterly. I was reckonin' on bankin' them tomorrow, but I've changed my mind. It's thought I'm fond of money, but I tell you, man, it's yours, every cent on it, if you save the child." Pausing, he swallowed hard, adding pleadingly: "Sure, it's a little thing I'm askin'—me, that never asked favor from God or man in all my life before. See, I'm kneelin' on my old, stiff knees. You've been to college, studied medicine; sure it would be easy now for you to save a little child. There's lots of them in the world that ain't wanted, but this is all I've got, now Marah's gone. Folks think I'm hard, but it's only *outside*; down underneath my heart's as soft as a woman's, and Marah broke it, but this little child's healin' it with the touch of its hand. I'm growin' old. Have mercy—save the child."

The doctor shook his head. "Brace up, man," he said, not unkindly. "I'll do my best, no matter what you offer, but life and death do not lie in my hands. I can do little but stand by and watch and try to help nature. But we are losing time. Where is the child?"

Ezra pointed up the stairs, but he did not follow. He remained below, pacing restlessly up and down the floor, until, as the night wore toward dawn, he heard Naomi creeping down the stairs. He made no step toward meeting her, only gripped his hands hard and stood resolutely grim and silent with lowering eyes and compressed lips as, slowly crossing the passageway, she opened the door and stood in the aperture. Ezra thought idly how old she looked with pale, tear-stained face and reddened eyes and trembling limbs.

She moistened her dry lips, hoarsely whispering, "Ezra." He did not respond, nor give any sign of recognition, so she crept near enough to lay a shaking hand on his shoulder. "Ezra," she shrieked in the courage born of desperation, "the Lord gave, the Lord has—" Ezra lifted his hand threateningly. "None of that, woman," he commanded authoritatively, and walked right out of the house into the garden,

where the first faint flush of dawn was suffusing the eastern sky. As life responded to the hope of day with the drowsy twitter of awakening birds, the triumphant crowing of cocks, the plaintive bleat of a motherless calf, Ezra lifted and shook his clenched fists to the heavens above his head. "Don't never expect nothin' more of me," he vociferated boldly. "You've done it now, and to me, what's kep' the ten commandments all my life. First you took Marah, and now the—" His voice broke, and the slow, reluctant tears of age trickled down his face. Suddenly an unusual noise arrested his attention. Listening, he crept nearer to the woodshed, from which proceeded a subdued rustling, then a sound of deep breathing, then unmistakably a stifled sneeze.

Ezra hesitated no longer; with a quick jerk he flung open the door, and called resolutely as he peered into the darkness: "Come out of that. I ain't afeerd of any skulkin' varmint on this airth. Come out of that, or I'll tear out every stick in the shed to get ye."

As he spoke, he seized and brandished one of the largest, bringing it down with a resounding whack on the pile. And, in response to his summons, from the darkest corner emerged a shabby, skulking figure with bandaged hands and downcast furtive eyes.

"You here!" gasped Ezra. "Escaped, have ye?" Then ironically: "I'll take pleasure in turnin' ye over to the proper authorities as soon as may be. First I'll have a word with ye, jailbird. What ye here for? To get even by tryin' to rob me? Maybe ye thought 'twas time the rents was comin' due, and that maybe I kep' them over night, before goin' to the bank. Maybe ye thought ye'd like the money from little Dorking." He laughed contemptuously. "Fine farmer ye'd have been!"

Martin did not answer, only drew apprehensively back against the wall.

Ezra came tauntingly nearer, demanding suddenly: "What ye got in your pockets? Been up to your old tricks?" As he spoke, he seized and shook the younger man with such vigor that he caught a suspicious rattling, and

grasping his shoulder with one firm hand, he plunged the other into the pocket of his coat and withdrew it, full of small silver. "Look at that!" he ejaculated triumphantly. "You to have that, and ye just out of prison! Where did ye get it?" emphasizing the question with a strenuous shake.

"Let me be," retorted Martin, freeing himself with a quick jerk. "It was give to me."

"That's a likely tale. We'll see what the perlice will say to that."

Martin straightened himself and looked Ezra squarely in the face. "Give me a chance. I've been hounded till I'm near done. I'd never have thought of robbing the till if you hadn't just drove me to it. Have mercy on me."

"Me," repeated Ezra—"me, to show mercy, who hain't never had none showed to me! Where did you get that money?"

"I tell you it's mine," retorted Martin sullenly; then hesitatingly: "Your wife gave it to me. She was sorry for me, and bandaged my hands and fed me, and gave me all she had. She's a good woman."

"I don't believe a word of that story," replied Ezra emphatically, scowl-

ing and deliberating, then suddenly demanding: "Where did ye see Naomi?"

"I wanted to see the child," responded Martin. "I hadn't heard about Marah—and I came."

Ezra stared at him blankly. "I got nothing left," he said slowly. "Marah's gone, the child's dead, and Naomi's succorin' a thief—" He spat out the word vindictively.

Martin shifted his position uneasily. Through the dirty little window of the shed he could see that the light was growing brighter, and he knew that every moment was diminishing his chance of escaping undetected. He looked furtively at Ezra, who, absorbed in his own thoughts, never seemed to observe his movements. So he began to creep almost imperceptibly nearer and nearer to the door, and was just calculating that a quick dash would land him outside in safety, when, turning, over his shoulder he saw the bent, bowed old man leaning against the wall. Something big and inarticulate stirred in Martin's heart, a dim consciousness of life's awful inevitability, as he fled into the early morning shadows, gasping spasmodically: "Life's mortal cruel. It's mortal cruel!"



THE POOR LITTLE LADY

By Allan Updegraff

HE gave me this fur coat that I've got on,
 And this nice ring:—it's paste, but don't it shine?
 One night he went and put his watch in pawn
 To buy this little pin:—Oh, he was fine!
 I can't believe he's really, truly gone:
 He said our love was *not* wrong, but divine.

I've wrote to him and asked him why he's sore;
 My letters all came back, marked "Wrong Address."
 I'll have to sell my furs and jew'ls, I guess:—
 I just can't *bear* to go back in the Store!

THE SUMMONS

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

OH, Summer's in the land again, and Summer's on the sea;
Across the blue horizon rim, the old gods beckon me;
The little ships ride restless at their anchors in the bay;
The birds are trooping northward, dear, and I must be away.

I see the Savoy mountains white; I hear the sheep bells ring
Below me in the valley where the little children sing;
And high above the timber line, along the glacier track,
The ice fields and the summit snows, they whisper me: "Come back!"

It's well I know your tender heart and kindness and grace,
And well I know the gentle light that sanctifies your face;
Unworthily, yet truly, I love you, Heaven-sent,
And nowhere, dear, save in your arms shall I secure content;

But sun and wind are calling me throughout the livelong day
From distant lands I used to know—from all the Far-Away:
Oh, Summer's in the hills again, and Summer's on the sea,
And Summer's in my heart, and you—well, you must set me free!



TRUST any woman for an anticlimax.



MISERY loves company, but Sin insists upon it.



DOCTORS may disagree about the healthfulness of modern dances, but there is no doubt that they have made many a woman indelicate.

SCENES FROM THE GREAT AMERICAN DRAMA

By George Jean Nathan

THE AUGUSTUS THOMAS PLAY

DR. ANDRÉ LUDWIG

I TELL you, my dear, just as the mere human being cannot explain the curious phenomenon that has made certain roses red and others white, so we humans cannot but believe that some day in the future we may be able to heal the ruffled spirit of the body by the mind. Who can say, too, that in years to come, just as those countless lathes of industry out there move upon man's faith in woman, we may not have air ships, we may not be able to transmit messages across the sea without wires, we may not be able to write with pens that shall be so constructed that they will contain ink, thus sparing us the necessity of dipping them periodically into an ink well? Who, indeed, shall say?

LUCILLE FRATZ

You're so wonderful, Doctor Ludwig. When I listen to you, all things seem right again.

DR. LUDWIG (*continuing*)

And so it is in art and medicine. All sciences are built upon man's trust in woman. Love makes a Rubens beautiful, the concerto of a Beethoven grand, the sculpture of a Rodin glorious. Without this faith, quinine, that subtle drug that cures colds, loses its puissance. It is love that makes the earth revolve. Do you remember Dante and Beatrice, Robert Burns and Jane Armour, Napoleon and Josephine? Everything is in the

future. We may even see the day when vehicles, through the blessed sacrament of motherhood, may be propelled by their own power, perhaps, indeed, by electricity.

LUCILLE

You're so wonderful, Doctor Ludwig. When I listen to you, all things seem right again.

DR. LUDWIG (*continuing*)

Do you remember what Ambadachi Khano, the prophet, said? "And ye shall trust that ye may not suspect." So it is with us. He who seats himself upon two chairs must inevitably be precipitated. Osteopathy is a science that rests upon the vital principle that most diseases are traceable to deformation of some part of the skeleton which, by mechanical pressure on the adjacent nerves and vessels, interferes with their action and the circulation of the blood. At the bottom of everything—mother love!

LUCILLE

You're so wonderful, Doctor Ludwig. When I listen to you, all things seem right again.

DR. LUDWIG (*continuing*)

And who can doubt the influence of the stars? Astrology is the science that assures us that the heavenly bodies exert, according to their relative positions at certain times, a direct influence upon human life and destiny, and that these

THE SMART SET

heavenly bodies determine in all given cases what this influence is and thus foretell the future. Thus we get saturnine from Saturn, jovial from Jupiter, mercurial from Mercury. Is it not therefore deplorable, my dear, that the practice of judicial astrology was forbidden under the severest penalties by the Romans as implying idolatry or heresy and falling under the greater excom-

munication? What was your mother's name, my dear?

LUCILLE (*sobbing*)

Her name was Angela.

DR. LUDWIG (*folding her in his arms passionately*)

Then you are my long lost daughter!

THE LESLIE CARTER PLAY

MIGNON D'ALVOIRCHAUX (*in a voice filled with emotion*)

Nevvvver, nevvvver, nevvvver, Bellvanocci, nevvvver shall I forget those happy, sunlit days when we together—two innocent children—picked our way among the dew-kissed violets in the fields of Santa Theresa di Nabroville—ah, those wonderful, wonderful hours when the heart of the child I then was, a child unstained by the world, cried out in joy, in joy; and then, Bellvanocci, all was changed. Love came and took me in its arms and I, a mere child, saw in Love's face nothing, nothing, nothing but purity—ah, Bellvanocci, nothing but purity.

COUNT BELLVANOCCHI (*in a silk hat*)

Away from me, wanton! We are through!

MIGNON (*in passionate crescendo*)

No, no, no, Bellvanocci, you cannot, you cannot! What have I done that I should be made to suffer so? I was a mere child; my child's eyes saw nothing but what was beautiful, nothing, nothing

but what was good and pure. You must not, Bellvanocci; I cannot leave you; I cannot live without you. I am a flower and I would fade without the warmth of your love. Bellvanocci, have pity on a woman who was a child once and whom the great, cruel, cold world has deceived and thrown aside. I was the world's plaything; I did so love beautiful things. For the sake of our little son, Bellvanocci!

BELLVANOCCHI (*at the door*)

Away from me, vile baggage! We are through!

MIGNON (*in a burst of agony, throwing herself on the divan*)

Ohhhh Gawd, forgive me! Give me back those wonderful hours when I looked on the world with a child's innocence. I am not a bad woman, Bellvanocci, I am not a bad woman. Nevvvver, nevvvver shall we pick violets again in the moonlit meadows of San Germaine! Nevvvver, nevvvver, nevvvver!

THE EDWARD SHELDON PLAY

MORROW BARNES (*candidate for governor*)

When my eyes rested on that Botticelli, gorgeous in its revel of warm exoticism, on that Sorolla with its wild prismatic flashes of Renaissance purple-gray, and when my ears feasted on the insurgent tonality of the Fifth Sym-

phony and on the vagrant chord-tears of "Till Eulenspiegel," my being rose and cried out to you: "Oh, Daudet, c'est de la bouillabaisse!"

MARY ZIMALLINI (*shrinking from him*)

You must not speak to me so! Keep your hands from me!

BARNES (*advancing upon her*)
You are mine; I palpitate for you.
(*He attempts to seize her.*)

MARY (*warding him off*)
Don't—I hate you—you animal!

BARNES (*pinioning her arms behind her*)
I am all hot and cold at the touch of you. What is religion, career, anything—now? I am a man, you are a woman. You are mine, mine—we are each other's.

MARY (*shrieking in the endeavor to free herself*)

You beast! You vile, low beast!!
You dog!!!

BARNES (*stifling her with his impassioned kisses*)

Yes, I *am* a beast! But you are no better. You, too, are a beast. We are all beasts. *You are mine!* (*He checks himself suddenly.*) Hark! What is that? (*The sound of a band is heard in the street below.*)

MARY (*in a quiet, far-off voice*)
They have come to learn your answer.

BARNES (*stepping to the open window*)
I shall give it to them.
(*He throws back the portières. As he does so a red light suffuses him and a great huzzah arises from the multitude outside. He lifts his hand for silence. The band starts playing "The Star-Spangled Banner."*)

CURTAIN.

THE ARMSTRONG-MIZNER PLAY

REGINALD BRAYTON (*a well-dressed crook who, however, wears a velvet Alpine hat*)

Ah, Miss Van Everen, and you are feeling well this morning? Isn't the sky beautiful?

MISS VAN EVEREN (*a society girl*)

You are so interesting, Mr. Brayton; I admire you a great, great deal. You must have had so many interesting experiences.

BRAYTON

Thank you, Helen. Will you pardon me a moment; my friend over there wishes to converse with me. (*He steps to the right. To PINK COLLINS, a fat and uncouth safe-breaker, gruffly*) Well, what is it?

COLLINS

Cheese it. I seen Gum-Boot Wallack, one o' them Burns men, hangin' around, and little Willie's gettin' chilly Regals.

BRAYTON

Brace up, you dough-head! You're always letting the wrinkles ease themselves onto the façade of your coco about nothing. And—for God's sake—try to

act like a gentleman! You embarrass me.

COLLINS (*sheepishly*)

Oh, all right, Bo. But if that guy hands us the steel wrist decorations, you needn't blame me.

BRAYTON (*returning to MISS VAN EVEREN*)

Ah, my dear Helen, my friend Mr. Collins merely wished to inform me that my broker desired to see me in an hour. (*Nonchalantly*) Only a small matter of twenty thousand, you know. Beastly nuisance, these brokers. Such vulgar fellows.

MISS VAN EVEREN

Won't you let me help you, Mr. Brayton?

BRAYTON

Call me Reginald.

MISS VAN EVEREN

Oh, I couldn't—really.

BRAYTON

Try, please. How much money have you?

THE SMART SET

MISS VAN EVEREN

I never keep track. Mama keeps it for me in the drawer of the escritoire in the parlor.

BRAYTON (*idly flicking the ashes from his cigarette*)

Ah—may I ask you to excuse me again, my dear Helen—just a moment? I wish to impart to Mr. Collins some in-

structions I carelessly forgot. You have very pretty eyes, my dear Helen. (*He steps close to COLLINS. In a low voice*) Wake up, you big nut, and listen to me. We've got to act quick. I'll propose to the girl and you get after the dough. I've got the lay-out. And if you slip up—well, they'll be able to collect what's left of you after I get through with you with a powder puff. Get me? With a powder puff!

THE DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PLAY

JAMESON HAWLEY (*a young American*)

Hello, Queen, I'm pleased to meet you. How's the King? I like your country pretty well—but, say, it needs a lot of improvements! You ought to see my country!

THE QUEEN (*haughtily*)

And what, pray, is your country?

HAWLEY (*with a patronizing smile*)

You mean to say you don't know what my country is? (*Proudly*) The United States of America!

THE QUEEN

And where, may I ask, is this United States of Domerigo?

HAWLEY (*swinging himself easily from the chandelier*)

Domerigo? *America!* A-m-e-r-i-c-a! Why it's a suburb of Heaven, its girls are the loveliest in all the world, every one of them is a queen in her own right. You alone, sweetheart, can compare with them.

THE QUEEN

You are a curious person—but, somehow, somehow, I cannot seem to become

angry with you. Tell me, Mr. Hawley, have you a title in your country?

HAWLEY (*proudly, jumping on the table*)

In my country, the United States of America, every man has a title.

THE QUEEN

And what is that title?

HAWLEY (*sliding down the banister*)

An American citizen!!

THE QUEEN

How interesting! And what, pray, is your profession?

HAWLEY (*taking a cigarette with a flourish from a gold case*)

Half-back.

THE QUEEN

Then come to me—kneel before me.

HAWLEY (*leaping over two chairs toward her*)

And why shall I kneel before you?

THE QUEEN (*with an arch smile*)

Because I wish to knight you—master of my heart—and ruler, at my side, of the kingdom of Dalmartia.

THE CHARLES KLEIN PLAY

JASON RITTER (*the millionaire District Attorney*)

But you must remember that duty is duty!

MAGGIE SHIRLEY (*a shop girl*)

I remember only that truth is truth.

RITTER

You dare thus to defy me!

MAGGIE

I have the right on my side. I am virtuous!

RITTER

And for that reason my son cannot marry you.

MAGGIE (*breaking down*)

How can you, Mr. Ritter, how can you? When I was workin' in my father's saloon in Ithaca I saw him—he was eatin' a pretzel—and love came to us. Oh, I know, I mayn't be high-born and his class and all that, but I've worked hard and I'm honest and I love him. You can't come between us, you just can't, Mr. Ritter. You nor the law nor anythin' can do that now. I know things look black for him, but I've got a little money saved up and he can have it. I'm goin' to fight you, Mr. Ritter, I'm goin' to fight you—and I'm goin' to win!

RITTER (*stubbornly*)

Right is right and wrong is wrong. Two wrongs do not, cannot, never did and never will make a right.

MAGGIE

Well, maybe they don't, but I've kept my name clean. I'll slave for him. He's just a weak boy, and I swear to you, Mr. Ritter, I swear to you I didn't know he owned the department store until after I had consented to become his wife. I swear it.

RITTER

So you defy me still! Well, we shall see—we shall see!

MAGGIE (*bitterly*)

Well, then, we *shall* see, Mr. Ritter. What you did to my poor father doesn't count now; what you had them do to me while I was your employee doesn't count either—nothin' counts. But if your son goes to jail, you can depend on one thing, Mr. Ritter. I'll be waitin' for him when he comes out!

THE WILLIAM COLLIER PLAY

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

Send it to my address.

MRS. COLLIER (*coquettishly*)

What is your address?

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

Number 210 Watt Street.

MRS. COLLIER (*archly*)

What street?

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

Watt Street!

MRS. COLLIER (*innocently*)

Well, that's what I asked you—what street?

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

Watt Street, Watt Street. Watt! Watt!!!

MRS. COLLIER (*quietly*)

Well, don't get angry. I see you have a wen on your nose.

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

When?

MRS. COLLIER

No, not when—wen!

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

Well, when?

MRS. COLLIER (*demurely*)

But it isn't well. If it were well, it wouldn't be a wen. By the way, do you know Mr. Knott?

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)

I do—not.

MRS. COLLIER (*girlishly*)

Then you know Mr. Knott?

THE SMART SET

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)
I said not.

MRS. COLLIER (*a bit vexed*)
So did I say Knott. I like you.

MR. COLLIER (*embarrassed, knocking
down a vase*)
That's because I like you.

MRS. COLLIER
But I'm not like you.

MR. COLLIER (*wiping the perspiration off
his brow*)
That's why I like you.

MRS. COLLIER (*demurely*)
Thank you. I'm so glad you haven't
red hair.

MR. COLLIER (*frowning*)
No, I haven't read Hare. I never
read those risqué stories.
(*Et cetera ad infinitum.*)

THE CHARLES RANN KENNEDY PLAY

A MAN

All is darkness. And one voices his
opinions, we voice our opinions, all of us,
because of duty—that alone.

ANOTHER MAN

You talk of duty! It doesn't seem
to be love or neighborliness or pity or
understanding or anything that comes
out hot and fierce from the heart of a
man. Duty! Duty! We talk of duty!
What sort of devil's duties are there in
the world, do you think, when they lead
blindly, wantonly, wickedly, to the murder
of— (*The sound of church bells suddenly
interrupts him. A strange look
comes into his face. The other man
stands rooted to the spot. There is a
sense of moorlands and desolate places.
Far off, on the plain, a vague peal, as of
thunder, is heard.*)

THE MAN (*after a long pause*)

Darkness still, but, you see, it makes
a difference! What we have done, we
two, should make us think of our
ghosts—forever.

THE OTHER MAN

You speak of ghosts! You will have
need to pray again tonight. Both of us
will have need. Why? I will tell you.
Because there is great power in words.

All the things that ever get done in the
world, good or bad, are done by words
and— (*The sound of a cow lowing in her
stall somewhere down the valley suddenly
interrupts him. An odd look comes into
his face. The other man stands rooted
to the spot. There is an intense moment
of silence, subtle, weird, unnatural.*)

THE MAN (*presently*)

Darkness—darkness! Mankind is
weak; mankind errs; mankind is human.
Of course, duty counts. The sacred
obligation must be attended to. We
must obey—and learn.

THE OTHER MAN (*heatedly*)

And were you, were they, so stirred
with affection for their principles?
There have been millions of your sort
in the long history of the world. I
wonder how many more millions there
will be in the years to come? How
many more millions of blind, dutiful,
bloody-handed— (*The sound of the bleat
of a lost sheep suddenly checks him. A
peculiar look comes into his face. The
other man's eyes take on a ravished ex-
pression. Both remain immovable. Grad-
ually the darkness melts away. An
 unearthly splendor fills the place. It is
seen to be a vast, open plain. In the sky,
five little white clouds are moving west-
ward.*)

THE AMERICAN MUSICAL COMEDY

OPENING CHORUS

It would be very hard to get
Among the smartest city set,
A bevy fair to equal this,
The pride of the Metropolis.

We all belong,
It's clear to see,
To Gotham's best society.
And here we are at four o'clock
In choicest bib and latest frock,
With nothing in the world to do,
But show ourselves—that's *entre nous*,
Before the crush most wise 't would be
To take a cup or two of tea,
And Gladys tell without delay
The latest gossip of the day.

LIEUTENANT JACK HARKNESS, U. S. N.

Ha, ha, Duke—you're an odd fellow!

DUKE REGINALD CLARENCE DE BUCK-
INGHAM (*with a monocle*)

No, I'm an Elk.

LIEUTENANT JACK HARKNESS, U. S. N.

Have you seen Yonkers?

DUKE REGINALD CLARENCE DE
BUCKINGHAM

No, what are they? I say, beastly
country, this! I wondah where Miss
Virginia is!

(*Enter MISS VIRGINIA VANDERVEER.*)

VIRGINIA

Song

I'm a strawberry blonde,
Of me they all are fond,
I've a beautiful red
On the top of my head
For I'm a beautiful blonde—
La, la, I'm a beautiful blonde—
La, la, she's a beautiful blonde,
Beautiful, beautiful blonde.

LIEUTENANT JACK HARKNESS, U. S. N.

Ah, Miss Virginia—

VIRGINIA (*interrupting him, piquantly*)
Remember, the Duke!

LIEUTENANT JACK HARKNESS, U. S. N.

But if your mother wasn't so set on
this match—

VIRGINIA (*eagerly*)

Yes?

LIEUTENANT JACK HARKNESS, U. S. N.

Love—the only thing that counts in
the world—would come into its own!

VIRGINIA

Song

I cannot understand a bit, when all is
done and said,
Why girls are brought into this world
for nothing but to wed;
A matrimonial barbecue, the social mar-
riage mart,
That's all we're really meant for, and
we're perfect in the part.

(*The sound of cannonading is heard in
the distance. Red Cross nurses march
upon the scene. LIEUTENANT JACK
HARKNESS, U. S. N., draws his sword,
puts the hilt on his chin and advances to
the footlights with VIRGINIA at his side
and the chorus of nurses at his back.*)

Song

The heroes of war since the days of the
flood

Have been subjects for song and for
story.

The cannon's loud roar and the shedding
of blood

Ever adds something more to their
glory.

The mission sublime, 'mid the carnage
and strife,

Is saving the soldiers who fall,

And the Red Cross nurse, risking life
for life,

Is the bravest and best of all.

Chorus

Red Cross, Red Cross,
Soothing the pain and weeping,
O'er soldier brought low,
Be he friend or foe,

Your vigil you ever are keeping.

The booming of cannon,

And rattle of drum and fife,

With trumpets sounding

And hearts rebounding,

That is life.

CURTAIN.

A GREEK LOVER OF QUEEN MAEVE

By Eleanor Rogers Cox

HOW shall my song reach to her where afar
She walks by streams unlit of sun or star;
Walks dreamingly, as one who in a glass
Beholds the wraiths of perished lovers pass:
Smiling to each pale face with lips that saith,
"How fares it, love, in the dim fields of Death?"

For just with such a smile—earth's last delight—
Glanced she adown the torchlit hall that night;
Herself a white rose 'mid a hedge of spears,
Set far past range of mortal hopes or fears:
So steel-bright 'mid its steel engirdlement,
Shone that white, moveless face upon me bent.

White face—whose fame, on scented sea winds sped,
Me thitherward to that far land had led,
From templed groves where sage and student walked,
And storied ways where moonlight lovers talked;
From all delights of mind and heart that lie
Betwixt our kind Athenian soil and sky.

But ah, that hour, which far repaid all cost
Of lesser loves, of gods and country lost,
When on a dream-starred night that great Queen leant
Her cheek to mine, and all our beings blent
In one long wonder glance, one earth eclipse
Of touching hands, of meeting eyes and lips!

A time for all things—with unfluttered breath
The flame-bright lips proclaimed, "His sentence—death!"
While wild, reverberate echoes of her word
The brazen rafters of the palace stirred,
And hail-swift down on sense and sound and sight
The smiting shields descended through the night.

Desire, delight and death—for this I came
To that far land: for this a little flame
Smaller than any star on night's pale edge,
My soul, a white moth flits by sand and sedge,
Flits evermore, till in the ceaseless whirl
Of Time's great wings it win again to her.

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

By Floyd Dell

THE curtain rises upon a garden walk, bordered by a stiff, staid English hedge, in front of which the human nature which is presently to exhibit itself will appear particularly piquant. A few formal, clipped evergreens show over the top of the hedge. The hedge itself comes out from the wings on each side at an angle toward the audience, while the middle section is parallel with the footlights. But, to provide a fitting background for the more passionate moments of this fantastic drama, there is at each side of the stage, near the front, a garden seat, half enclosed by a white-trellised rose arbor—which also serves to mask the entrances and exits of the characters along the garden walk.

The entrances and exits, mark you, are of a quaint and artificial regularity. For there are four characters, who move in groups of two, and as each group disappears behind the rose arbor along the garden walk at the right of the scene, the other group appears at the left. These characters may go fast or slowly, may pause in the middle of the stage to quarrel or may adjourn to one of the garden seats to make love, but they move gradually across the stage to the right and eventually disappear behind the rose trellis.

Doubtless you will already have discerned that here is a new dramatic setting, one which Gordon Craig would like to have invented, and which David Belasco would dearly love to spoil with a disorderly clutter of realistic objects of no significance whatever. But, having paused a moment to admire, let us turn to the characters.

When the curtain rises, each group is

seen by the audience at either end of the garden walk, unseen, of course, by the other. At the right there is a girl of eighteen and a boy a little older. They are clasped in each other's arms. At the left there is a woman of—well, she might be the girl's mother, but she has beauty and dignity. But what is this? A man of superb middle age is there with her, and suddenly he embraces her. Her husband, do you say? No, you say nothing of the kind. For even in this first quick glance, as you turn from the young people to this man and woman, you note that there is nothing of the casual affection of a husband in this embrace. No, it is the tender ferocity of the lover.

But—was it the sound of a twig, startling them, the lovers young and old? For in a moment each woman disengages herself from the arms of her lover, and casts a startled look down the garden walk. The girl, with her hands in a caressing gesture on the shoulders of the boy, bids him stay where he is. She turns, and gaily singing a few lines of a song, starts down the garden path. The woman, with slower step, has already started. A moment later, and they meet, in the middle of the stage, in front of the staid old hedge.

When they see each other, they smile, and the woman says, in a tone warm with conscious affection:

"Well, little girl?"

And the girl asks with affectionate concern: "Is your headache better, mother?"

"Yes, dear, quite gone."

As she speaks, the woman holds out her arm, as though to draw the girl to her,

and the girl nestles for a moment in the curve of her mother's arm. She puts her hand up over her mother's shoulder, patting her gently with her fingers. One can see that she regards her mother as an old lady. And one can see, too, that her mother regards her as a child. But it is an effective tableau they present, the mother and the daughter, or rather, it would be, did not the audience see—as it does not always see in real life—the boy waiting quietly behind the rose arbor, and the man waiting at the other end of the garden walk. As it is, the woman and the girl represent the mutual affection of the two generations, plus the mutual ignorance of each other's real interests, and the mutual hypocrisy by which they conceal those real interests from each other. This touching scene dissolves when the woman says gently to the girl:

"Now run away, dear."

And the girl goes back whence she came, into the arms of the boy, and off the scene.

The woman, too, goes back, but comes forward again with the man. She makes her way to the nearest garden seat, the one at the left, and sits down. The man remains standing rather ceremoniously in front. Such are the quaint affectations of middle-aged love, in some at least of its stages. Do not expect these people to behave romantically at the outset.

When the lady has seated herself, she looks up. One perceives that she is by no means so aged as her daughter thinks. One suspects in her a capacity for intrigue that would amaze that young woman. Nevertheless, all that she does is to look up with a bright glance and a little gesture of her hand toward the empty space in the seat beside her.

The man steps forward very suddenly, drops on his knees before her, seizes the hand which lies on her knee, and kisses it fiercely. She lets him do it, and brings the other hand softly over to his shoulder.

He raises his head and tries to take her in his arms. But she has not any longer

that natural daring of youth which makes of any corner a place to woo, and so she must discourage him for the moment. She bends back, and then pushes him away with both hands, saying anxiously:

"Don't, Harry, don't!"

The man, thinking the cause of her anxiety more immediate, rises and steps away, so that if anyone had come in, he and the lady would have been decorously apart. Then, understanding the situation, he returns, and stands in front of her in a challenging attitude, one foot set firmly in front of the other. He braces himself for an argument with a woman—for a woman, after all, one's beloved insists upon being.

She looks up at him quizzically, and then asks:

"Well?"

He says earnestly: "Why do you do that?"

"What?" she asks.

"Why do you repulse me like that? Don't you really care for me?"

She answers quietly: "What do you think?"

Whereupon the man slowly turns and walks across to face the other garden seat.

She asks wonderingly: "What are you doing?"

"I'm thinking about it," he says.

"Does it take so long?" she asks.

"What is the difficulty?"

"I can't help thinking," he says, "that a woman who was really in love with a man wouldn't be afraid to show it."

The woman smiles a beautiful smile of understanding, forgiveness and ridicule. She says: "Only a boy, after all! Yes, even you! Well, you shall have your proof!"

So she rises, and goes over to him. Halfway over, her restraint goes, and she breaks into an eager run. When he hears that, he turns and clasps her in his arms. She puts her head against his shoulder. This should indicate to the audience, which may have been in doubt up to this moment, that they are really in love with each other. But, such scenes being demoralizing to beholders, it is not

proper to prolong it. So, with his arm about her shoulders, they turn and go out, the man saying over and over, as though the word were a charm:

"Helen! Helen!"

At this moment, much to the relief of the audience, there enter at the other end of the garden walk the boy and the girl. One naturally hopes that adolescent passion will be somewhat different from middle-aged love in its manifestations.

And perhaps it is. These two lovers do not, at least, seem to have the same command of the situation that their elders had. The girl comes on first, with crimson cheeks and something of the air of a hunted animal. The boy is troubled, his face grave.

The girl goes with a quick constrained step to the garden seat at the left, then over to the other, where she sits for a moment. The boy follows her, not closely, but never taking his eyes from her. As she suddenly jumps up from the seat and makes as if to go out at the right, he goes up and intercepts her with a swift nervous gesture of the arm.

She looks at him with a long, deep glance, stopping as if caught. The stiffness of her pose relaxes, and the world is lost. He whispers:

"Kiss me again!"

Then she straightens up, and slowly and heavily shakes her head, which is bent back out of reach of his eager lips. She lifts her arms and takes hold of his wrists, and bears them down. Then, as he desists, she says, in a far-away tone: "You are trembling all over."

The boy takes her hand in his, and says, putting his lips close to her ear, and investing his words with significance: "So are you."

And hand in hand they go out slowly.

If this were a regular play, you would have some right to ask where they went, and what occurred between them further. But in a fantastic comedy that is no affair of yours. When next you see them they will be quarreling. It is enough that you know that love has overtaken them, even as it has overtaken their elders.

These elders, meanwhile, have entered the scene from the other end of the garden walk. The woman turns to the man and says: "It seems impossible that we should have our happiness. It is all a dream."

Perhaps it is only in dreams that people whom the process of years has divested of the insane recklessness of youth can have their happiness. At any rate, she puts her hand happily in that of the man, and they walk across. Suddenly she stops. She puts her hands up to his shoulders, as if seeking reassurance: "I wonder if I dare?"

The man answers: "It's not a thing to try unless you do dare."

The woman laughs. "Did you really think I was afraid?" she asks.

Thus they go out.

And the boy and girl enter, quarreling. It is not clear what they are quarreling about. They proceed sullenly to the garden seats at opposite sides of the stage. The girl says coldly:

"Well, of course—if that is what you think . . ."

And the boy answers: "It isn't a question of what I think. It's the truth."

"Oh, the truth!" replies the girl angrily. "If you care no more for me than that . . ."

The boy says: "I never thought this of you. Can't you understand—"

The girl replies bitterly: "I understand well enough . . ."

Perhaps you want to know what they are quarreling about. But it makes no difference. It is over some little thing, perhaps over a question of manners. Some third person has come into their romance, and the girl has become acutely sensitive to the boy's attitude toward her. Perhaps he has not magnified her in the eyes of the world as it is the duty of her lover to magnify her.

After all, when manners become important, they are more important than anything else in the world, for they are a sign of different education or economic status or race, and they constitute a standing mockery of that unity of thought which romance foolishly predi-

cates. When lover and lover are of two different tribes, with different tribal customs, then—until they have become old enough to sink such differences, and permit any outlandish thing in the beloved—then there ensues estrangement.

Look at these two lovers! The boy is aching to cross the room and take the girl in his arms. If he did it would make things all right—for at least a day. But some stiff, stark, crazy sense of justice and consistency prevents him from doing this. It is necessary to give in, to deny the truth, to say that black is white, before the girl will relent. And—foolish lad—he won't. So they sit there, silent, seeing the gulf which by virtue of their differences in tastes and thoughts really lies between them, grow more impassable every minute. They have loved each other, and of their love created a magic bridge flung out over the gulf. On the middle of this bridge they have met and kissed and sworn eternal devotion. But they hear a snapping, a crackling, a rending of timbers, and they feel the frail bridge breaking beneath them. They give one look into the gulf, and flee to opposite sides of the chasm, back on safe and familiar ground. Then they look again at each other with longing. But they have lost that confidence which alone can build bridges over the abyss.

The girl rises. "If you don't care . . ." she says.

It is all the advance she will make. The boy takes but the slightest advantage of it. "But I do care."

The girl shrugs her shoulders. "It doesn't look like it."

Which is quite true. It doesn't look like it. Nevertheless, it is true. He does care. But he has lost his chance. For the girl turns and goes out.

The boy follows without a word.

The man enters, walking slowly. The woman follows with head proudly erect.

"But after all, Helen . . ." he says.

The woman replies vehemently: "Another year! No. I tell you I cannot stand it!"

The man puts his hand on her

shoulder. "Yes, I know," he says compassionately.

She draws away from him. "Oh, but you don't know. How can you know? You can always ask with your eyes. It is I who have to deny. You can do what you like and say what you like. And when I repulse you—that is what you call it—then you are hurt. What do you think I am made of? A year of waiting, a year of torturing caresses—a year of this—this tightrope walking—balancing myself on a perilous edge with tense nerves—no, I can't, Harry."

The man asks miserably: "But what can we do?"

Yes, what can they do? Since all the readers of these pages are happily mated, there is no need to outline the scheme by which the woman expects to gain her freedom at once. Suffice it that she has found a way of turning the divorce law to human and humane purposes. She says—as though it were any defense of her legally questionable action:

"It will make life possible for me."

The man asks the practical question: "But will your husband consent?"

The woman answers: "He must consent. I will make that plain to him. Either that or something worse. And he has his pride."

It appears that she has been making up her mind to this effect for a long time. "You thought I was a coward, Harry—I know you did. But I was trying to decide. I knew it had to be one thing or the other. One thing or the other!"

Asks the egotistic male: "Could you have given this up?"

"Yes," she answers. "I have the courage to give up happiness, or to take it."

"And you are going to take it?" he demands.

"Yes, I am going to take it," she says, as they go out.

The girl, followed by the boy, comes in. He asks sadly:

"But can't I do or say anything?"

She answers with suppressed emotion: "No, you can't do or say anything. What would be the use if you did? It would start all over again. We know

what the trouble is. We were never intended to be together. It was all a mistake. You are one kind of person, and I am another. We can't patch it up."

He says: "Yes, I know that's true. At least, I've said the same things to myself. I've said the same things, and made up my mind to put an end to a situation that was only bringing unhappiness to us both. But it seems such a terrible pity. We were so happy. Must it all end this way—after everything there has been between us?"

"Yes, it must all end. Come now and shake hands and say good-bye."

"Oh, but it mustn't end this way," he protests. "It mustn't. I'll do anything, promise anything. . . . Let's make one more effort."

"Don't make it too hard for me," she says. "Oh, I could take you in my arms this moment and be perfectly happy. But I've got to be sensible for us both now. So good-bye."

She holds out her hand. He takes it, but asks: "Won't you kiss me?"

She replies in a constrained tone: "Please go."

"You are right. I mustn't kiss you. Good-bye."

He releases her hand and goes over to the right. There he turns, and she suddenly comes up to him. She says:

"Kiss me."

He takes her in his arms and kisses her, and holds her close for a while. Then he suddenly releases her and stiffens. He says: "I must go." And he goes, swiftly.

The girl stands at the end of the garden walk and looks after her lost lover. Then she stoops a little and puts her hands up to her face, but seems to restrain her tears. In a moment she straightens up, holding her arms stiffly at her sides, with her hands bent outward at the wrists. After a slight convulsion her body relaxes, and she turns and comes forward with bowed head. After a few steps she lifts her head proudly in defiance of her pain, and tries to sing. She sings a few words of the song we heard her singing before. But she stops and leans against the hedge.

Her mother meanwhile has entered, on the arm of the man. She is a little ahead, and she looks back over her shoulder at the man with a confident smile.

At that moment she hears her daughter's voice, singing. She stops, and a change comes upon her face. That voice, so young and innocent and child-like, unnerves her. She looks first frightened, and then turns upon the man an aspect of stern grief. Her dream has ended. She tears herself from his arms and cries in a low and tense voice: "No! That child! . . . I can't, I can't."

She goes up close to him, puts her hands on his arms, and says pleadingly: "You know what it means to me, Harry. It's giving up happiness—it's giving up life. But, Harry, she's only a child. She knows nothing about such things—love and the pain of love . . ."

The girl, who has been leaning against the hedge, throws back her head and stares upward. Her hands are clenched, her body a gesture of woe. She is wrung visibly with love and the pain of love.

The woman goes on, after a moment's silence: "I can't bear to bring such terrible realities into her life. I mustn't hurt her. Harry! We mustn't hurt her."

The man knows her too well to plead. He lifts his hand with a gesture of hopeless acquiescence, and says: "All right, Helen, I won't ask you any more."

And he turns and goes. She watches him go, her hands pressed to her bosom.

Then, composing herself, she comes down to the front of the stage. The girl, having regained her calm, comes down also. Mother and daughter meet, as before, in front of the staid old English hedge. The roses in the arbors at the sides dream on and keep their secrets.

Mother and daughter regard each other for a moment. In their glance there is the sublime indifference and the sublime hypocrisy of mothers and daughters. Both have suppressed all signs of their grief. They slip easily into an affectionate tableau. The girl pats her mother's shoulder, and the woman says:

"Well, little girl?"

And the curtain falls.

A DESERT SONG

By Clinton Scollard

STRANGE was his garb, just a thing of tatters;
Strange was his lute, with its rude, rough strings;
Strange was his voice, but, forsooth, what matters
If the minstrel touches the heart when he sings!
And while over us, like a cresset, hung
The star of love, thus the minstrel sung.

Love, you come as the swallows
Out of the far away,
Out of the dream-dim hollows
Beyond the night and the day.

Like a lotus flower your face is,
Bright as the moon is bright,
And you make the desert places
A vision of lost delight!

Your blushes are filched from under
The skin of the pomegranate;
Your eyes are like wells of wonder;
Your lips bear the words of fate!

You banish brooding and sorrow,
And the djinns of black despair,
And we fain would forget tomorrow
In the shadow of your hair.

*He ceased, and we heard the camels moaning,
And the jackals bark, as the night grew long;
And then to the desert wind's intoning
We slept, and dreamed of the minstrel's song!*



A CRYING baby is a sign of marriage. If it isn't it should be.

THE FALSEHOOD SHOP

By Edgar Saltus

THE servant, opening the door, announced: "Miss Egon."

I had not quite expected that. A moment previous I had been a thousand years away, among the young empresses of Byzance, whose brilliant lives I was trying and, what is worse for them, was succeeding in etching in dull prose. But, as the girl entered, the dead vanished, exorcised by the living, and I sprang forward to greet her.

"Where is Herbert, do you know?" she agitatedly asked.

To lie to a lady is never nice, yet tell the truth and sometimes it is not only the devil that you shame.

"No," I answered with affected candor. With an equally assumed appearance of surprise, I added: "Don't you?"

She stared at me and I at her. In her face was anxiety, uncertainty, constraint, a little panorama of emotions, but most noticeably charm. Ordinarily, not one of all the beauties of Byzance could have been as fair as she. But there were days when she was merely exquisite. This was one of them. She swallowed a sob, sank into a chair and, still looking at me, said, and simply enough: "He is dead."

Well, yes, in a sense—that is to say, so far as she was concerned—Herbert Brook was dead. But I could not tell her so. I lacked the courage. Even otherwise I lacked the imagination to bury him decently—to bury him, for that matter, at all. In search of cover, I dropped into the vague.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "Why do you say that?"

But, for the moment, I must have overdone it. For the moment, she must have caught, or thought she caught, a

note that did not ring quite true, for at once, much as though she suspected that the brute might be somewhere concealed, she looked about, at the bookcases that lined the room, at the windows that gave on the Champs Elysées, at a portrait that hung on the wall—a portrait which displayed me in the resplendent costume of my Heidelberg corps, a great Dane crouching at my boots.

It was ten years ago that the thing was painted. Since then, my historical genuflections have bent me a bit. On the other hand, *kneipes* and their plenteous beer failing, I am less stout. Otherwise, barring of course the medieval accoutrements, the picture shows me much as I still am, with, moreover, what I shall always retain, the cicatrix of a student duel slashed across my face.

The girl's eyes turned from the daub to me. Their promenade about the room had occupied but a moment, yet during it, whatever suspicion she may have had must have died. She looked as she had before, exquisite, anxious, constrained.

"Yes," I reiterated, "why do you say that?"

Then the meager story of it limped forth to me, who knew it all and better, and in particular the key to it, which I was determined she should never get.

Herbert Brook was, confound him, my cousin. Relationship began and ended there. He was alarmingly good-looking and disgustingly rich, while I am but the scarred-faced historian of improbable queens. The role, passably obscure, had prevented me from ever more than tentatively approaching this girl, to whom Herbert had strummed another guitar. It was a way of his, a way which

often had aroused in me the sin of envy, to carry everything by storm. But when he met Kate Egon, which he did entirely through my own stupidity, I had no fear of him, and that for the ridiculous reason that he was vehemently in love with a friend of hers, Jenny Price, who, however, as fate would have it, threw him over, whereat, in the rebound, and out of pique perhaps, he made up to Kate.

At the time we were all in New York. As soon as I learned how things were going, I saw that there was nothing for me to do except to be going also. A week later I was in Paris, where, among the Elysian Fields, on the corner of Boetia Street—beautiful and significant names!—I took the apartment which for the present my books and pictures adorn. "*Lascia la donna e studia la matematica*," somebody said to someone who happened to be in circumstances such as mine, and it was in an effort to follow that sage advice and forget Kate that I turned, not indeed to mathematics, but to the problematic princesses of the past.

These people diverted me. On one occasion another person did also. This was a neighbor of mine, Madame de Trèfle, a prophetess much frequented by the superselect, whose apartment adjoined my own. A bagatelle of the door favoring, I made her acquaintance, as a result of which a sitting ensued, one that took place in a room furnished in cornflower and silver, filled with costly futilities, and which, like my library, overlooked the Elysian Fields. There, this lady, a tall, dark creature, dressed capriciously in champagne, yet with a face which in repose was strangely noble, looked me graciously over, closed her eyes and, apparently, fell asleep.

"Ah!" she presently exclaimed. "Your home is a city of pineapple cupolas covered with colors, a city in which the people wear painted gauze. But no. I am foolish. That is not your home; it is the home of your thoughts; yet there in the wide, white streets over which chariots roll, always you are looking for someone whom you do not see. No, you do not see her there, but here, in Paris, you will see her soon, and then—"

Madame de Trèfle gave a little convulsive start, opened her eyes, smiled and added: "The fee is fifty francs. You may pay my secretary at the door."

It was worth it, though of the prophecy part I did not believe a word. In spite of which, or perhaps precisely on that account, the very next day, on the Champs Elysées, I ran into Kate. She and her mother had just come over, and pending Herbert's arrival, were stopping at a hotel near by. At tea that afternoon I told them about Madame de Trèfle, or as much, at least, as I judged advisable, and Kate, properly astounded, asked me to take her to her. I promised to do so, but before I could, all of a sudden this thing occurred; or rather and more exactly, one evening, a little later, when I was dressing, abruptly Herbert appeared.

I knew he was looked for that day, but his irruption in my rooms surprised me. By whomsoever else he may have been expected, it was certainly not by me. But I am, I hope, always civil, and, interrupting the tying of my tie to shake hands, I threw out: "Good trip?"

He dodged it, and with laughing eyes threw back: "You remember Jenny Price?"

In the mirror before me I nodded at him.

"She was on the ship. We have made it up."

I turned on him. "What about Kate?"

Running his long, thin fingers through his thick hair, he gave me a queer little look. "That's it. You'll have to explain."

I had finished with my tie and was putting on my coat, but at the outrageousness of that, I stopped.

"I'll see you hanged first!"

From a gold case he got out a cigarette, and coolly offered me another. As he did so I looked him over. It is the misfortune of a historian that he is obliged to live the lives of other people, to participate in their vices and virtues—when they have any—and, at the moment, I realized that it is impossible for a man to get himself more into what is vulgarly termed a fix than in becoming engaged to two girls. But I realized

also that the penalties for a polite felony of this kind are those which the conscience alone creates, and, as for conscience, I felt that Herbert had about as much as a weasel.

Then immediately I thought of Kate. I could fancy Joy bidding her farewell, Misery offering its arm, I could see her abrupt migration from noon into night. Yet, oddly enough, the picture evoked, instead of inciting me to assault, presented vistas which in some unaccountable manner restrained. I am surely not a hypocrite, and it annoyed me that they should.

At once, with a jerk, I got into my coat, and turning again on the brute, angrily I flung at him:

"It is a surgical operation you are asking me to perform."

At the charge, his eyes lost none of their laughter. On the contrary, airily he retorted: "Yes, and you are just the chap to know how."

He had been seated. Now springingly he stood up, looking as he did so quite as though he were dumping on the floor—and on me—any and every care.

At that I could indeed have kicked him. But my servant entered. In a moment Herbert had caught up his hat and gone.

I had planned that evening to dine out and then look in at the Opéra. The mood now for either excursion fell by. I told the servant to fetch whatever was easiest, a bit of chicken, a leaf or two of lettuce; and presently, these things consumed, I sat, an unlighted cigar between my teeth, considering in what manner without anodynes, without narcotics, without mortification morbus setting in, I could safely operate on Kate. Yet from no matter what angle I viewed it, the task of cutting into her the fact that the man of all others was not the man for her, and of cutting it, moreover, without making her wince, resolved itself into a high necromantic feat for which I entirely lacked the art. None the less, it had to be done. But how?

In this dilemma I lost myself until ultimately there surged the gleam of a plan of a falsehood shop, one which I would open and fill with mendacities so spa-

cious and splendid that they would both assuage and console. Only—and here was the hitch—try as I might, I could not conjure one. Had this brute of a cousin of mine not been disgustingly rich, I might have invented some tale of financial turpitudes, though, if I did, any such story would only abase Kate in her self-esteem. Were he not then in Paris, I might have pretended that he had gone suddenly insane, though, if I did, she was just the girl to pack off to him. What then could I do? To open a falsehood shop is all very well, only, to open it profitably, one should be able to stock it, and the shelves of mine were bare. Yet, I told myself, there must be others, and immediately I knew that there were, and very convenient at that, just across the hall, in the apartment of my neighbor, Madame de Trèfle. Thereupon I determined to go to her on the morrow, to ransack her shelves and then to call on Kate.

But before I could, it was Kate who called on me.

Now, as she sat in my library, she told me what little she knew, which, summarily, was to the effect that Herbert had certainly arrived the day before and since then had as certainly disappeared.

"He is dead," she repeated.

So he was, at least so far as she was concerned, but I had not yet got my wind, and in sparring for it, I again asked why she said that.

The dangers of Paris, she explained, the Apaches, the demon chauffeurs, the tiger bandits, adding that Herbert always had a lot of money with him and concluding with the perhaps natural suggestion that I accompany her to the police.

"I will do better than that," I replied. "I will take you to Madame de Trèfle."

She had been looking down and away, but at this she looked up. I could see she was remembering what I had told her of the prophetess, and I could not but reflect that, coming from anyone but me, the story might have seemed a bit fantastic. But precisely as no grammarian ever wrote a line that was fit to read, so has no historian ever displayed a minimum of imagination. That reas-

suring fact was in my favor. Her face brightened. She rose to the bait.

Yet at once I realized that, however lacking in imagination I may be, I had been lacking also in forethought. I had neglected to dust the shop, and I asked Kate to be good enough to wait a second while I went and inquired whether Madame de Trèfle were free.

To this Kate assented, and presently I was again in the cornflower and silver *salon* where the prophetess received. It was a minute or two before she appeared, and meanwhile I looked out on the avenue which, on this high noon, was flooded with sunshine, filled with people, shuttled with fleeting cars.

But now a door was opening. I turned. Madame de Trèfle was before me, and I bowed over her jeweled hand.

"Madame," I said as I straightened, "I have come to ask a favor. A girl has been thrown over for another. She is unaware of it. She thinks that the brute is dead. Will you let me bring her to you? And when I have, will you tell her—well—whatever you like: that he has tuberculosis, anything gentlemanly and contagious, and that for her own sake she must never see him again."

As I spoke, I got out my cardcase. "Your usual fee is fifty francs. In this instance permit me to make it a hundred."

Madame de Trèfle half raised a finger. "Not for a thousand."

"But," I protested, "it is an act of charity that I ask."

She sniffed at me. "Mistaken charity! Truth should never be withheld from those who are worthy to receive it."

"No doubt," I retorted. "But it is not a question of that. The girl could not be worthier. The point is, she isn't fit."

"Ta-ta-ta!" Madame de Trèfle, in mounting crescendo, replied. With an uplift of the chin she considered me. Her eyes narrowed. "Bring her here; I will judge of that."

I did not like it—I did not like it in the least; but there was no way out of it. I went across the hall and brought Kate back.

"My child," that woman said to her, "seat yourself in the chair here by the

window and, for a little, while I am looking at you, I beg of you do not speak."

I stationed myself behind Kate and for a moment stared out at the avenue. Then I turned to Madame de Trèfle, who was not looking at Kate at all. On the contrary, she was comfortably seated, her eyes closed, and appeared to be asleep. But presently and monotonously she began to speak.

"My dear, you are but recently come to Paris. Before coming you thought yourself interested in a man. But he is not good enough for you. You will not marry him. You will marry a man of mark."

Whether Kate heard or not, certainly she did not heed. She half turned to me and indicated the window, through which, in the avenue below, suddenly I saw my cousin, seated in a heliotrope car, side by side with Jenny Price, whose hand he was holding and in whose face he was gazing with that cannibal expression which men cannot help displaying when they feel that they could eat the lady up.

There is no mistaking that expression—no one could mistake it; and as a congestion of traffic held the motor there, I saw that Kate had not mistaken it; that in spite of my precautions now, at last, she understood. Would she, I wondered, faint? But I should have known her better than to fancy she could do anything so inane. Besides, had her pride needed a moxa, instantly it was supplied. The traitorous pair, shelled by vibrations from the batteries of our eyes, simultaneously looked up. They saw us, flushed, turned and, the congestion relieved, shot on.

"Yes," Madame de Trèfle was saying, "you will marry a marked man—a man with a scar."

At that, with a little convulsive start, she blinked, considered us, then, rising, she smiled and added: "You may pay my secretary at the door."

But, dear me, it was months and months before I was able to discern from Kate even the possibility that in that falsehood shop was truth. It took Kate longer, but, in the end, God bless her, she discerned it, too.

THE BYPATH

By Thomas Grant Springer

IT peeped out on a main-traveled walk beside the driveway, peeped shyly and seductively, like a pert face half seen between curtains that roguish hands held tantalizingly. If you accepted its half-implicit challenge, it led you off on a vagrant way through the closely woven, artificial wilderness of the public park till it needed no stretch of imagination to set its goal as Arcady; but you should never follow it to the end any more than you should chase the rainbow for its pot of gold, for, should you do the latter, the sun would surely laugh at you long before you reached the mystic goal, and if you did the former, the sons of men would laugh at your unconsciously bewildered expression when you found yourself on the main walk again. The little path was just a five minutes' excursion into God's country that you could prolong indefinitely if you loitered and lolled on the fallen log, lying in such careful carelessness just halfway of the journey.

Johnny used to prolong the journey till he had made a smooth spot on the rough bark at one end of the log, but that was after he had done the rainbow chase and two loud-voiced shopgirls on a Sunday airing had exploded in giggles as he emerged from the path. That was his voyage of discovery, and though he returned many times, entering from either way, he always dreamed journeys end on the fallen log and retraced his steps the way he had come. He entered often and dreamed much; in fact, that was Johnny's greatest fault—he dreamed too much, and the great, bustling city that seemed so far away from the fallen log had so few places for dreamers that Johnny had never

found his. That was why his trousers were frayed at the bottom and baggy at the knees and his coat was shiny at the elbows and a rusty green across the shoulders.

Often, when the city made his head whirl and the crowd elbowed him aside, he fled from the mad rush, walked to the park (for Johnny had no steady employment and very little money) and sat long hours on the fallen log. A tiny rabbit seemed to recognize him as a kindred spirit and slowly made friends. The scurrying quail used to pause near him, while the impudent city sparrows, occasionally flitting in from the driveway, used almost to perch on him and crowd him from the log. The linnets nested in the trees above the path and sang to him. Saucy jays tilted on swinging boughs to scold him. There was more sociability on the by-path than Johnny found on life's highway, and so he grew to loiter there more and more between the odd jobs that came his way.

Then one day he found an intruder usurping his place on the log. The noon sunflood, filtering through the wind-swayed canopy of green, touched her big hat with its shiny feather till it glistened. Her head was bent, and she was tracing aimless patterns in the dust with the toe of an absurdly small, high-heeled shoe. Her figure was slim and lithe, the soft lines suggested by the fashionable cut of her gown. Johnny stood and stared at her, astonished at such a person in such a place, and fascinated by the whiteness of her slender hands clasped idly in her lap. Then something, perhaps the magnetism of his gaze, made her lift her face. It

was small-featured and pale, the mouth vividly scarlet, drooping a little at the corners; a sweet young face with beautiful big eyes, too big, and old with a something Johnny did not know. As they met his he blushed, awkwardly removed his hat and stood resting his weight on one foot. Then she smiled, a smile that lighted up her eyes, though one who knew more than Johnny could have seen that her lips were used to smiling when her eyes were somber. Johnny blushed uncomfortably and shifted his weight to the other foot as he twirled his shabby hat.

"Were you going to sit down, too?" she asked, in a low voice. Johnny gulped and eyed the worn place on the edge of the log but did not answer. "There is plenty of room," she went on, a vague invitation in her tone. Johnny lifted his eyes to hers, caught the light in them, then sat down on the extreme edge of the log. He did not put on his hat, and a little, vagrant wind playfully caught the lock of hair that always fell over his eyes and lifted it. He shook it back, still unmindful of his hat, nor did the little wind seem to cool his hot face.

She turned from him and began tracing patterns in the dust again. He watched the toe of her shoe in shy fascination for a moment, then looked away as she raised her head. A look of pain that yet had something of joy in it crossed her face, but Johnny was looking down the path. There his eyes encountered his little friend, the rabbit, peeping out of the brush, unconscious of the intruder whose form Johnny's hid. He forgot her and began making quiet, friendly overtures. Surprised at the expression on his face, she leaned forward till she saw the shy, furry creature creeping slowly to him, then drew back, realizing herself an intruder. Johnny's hand had just touched the furry head when bunny sighted her, and the cottony tuft of its tail disappeared in the brush. Johnny came slowly back to reality and glanced shyly across the log. The big eyes were regarding him with wide amazement and he felt very uncomfortable.

"Can you make the rabbit come to you always?" the low voice asked.

Johnny nodded slowly. "Yes'm, almost," he said.

"But such a shy creature—"

"Yes'm; I—I—guess they know I'm shy myself."

She watched him, blushing like a girl, noted the downcast eyes and the hat revolving in the nervous fingers, and contrasted him with men she knew, men who hunted shy creatures with every sort of weapon, then thought of the trust of the timid, furry creature that crept to him so readily. A sigh rose from her bosom and became a sob in her throat, but Johnny sat twirling his shabby hat and did not look up. A moment later she asked: "Do you often come here?"

"Yes'm, almost every day when I'm not working—almost every day lately," he added with apologetic humor, then colored deeply at his daring and relapsed into embarrassed silence.

It had been long since she saw a man blush so readily—in fact, the thought came to her that it had been long since she had seen a real man. A great desire to know what such a one was like seized her. Slowly she drew him out with a look, a word well timed and placed till his soul like the rabbit peeped shyly out, then crept closer, closer, until he was telling her of the city and how it forced him out into the bypath, him whom the hurrying crowd on life's highway shoved aside. He told her quaint dreams and fancies the tiny bit of woodland brought him, of the bird's courtship and home building, and how he watched the brood take their first flying lesson. He translated the rancorous chatter of the shrewish jay and laughed at the citified sparrows that flitted for a brief sojourn into the little glade like townspeople rustivating, but soon hurried back to the driveway. He whistled up a few timid quail that came querulously answering his call, to scurry off when they found he was not alone.

The sun went down behind the trees. It flecked the top branches with a brighter gold as the shadows deepened on the path. At last she looked at her

tiny watch and rose with a startled expression.

"I did not know it was so late."

"Only about four," said Johnny, glancing up at the sun-gilded tree tops.

"Is that how you tell the time?" she asked, following his glance comprehensively.

"Yes'm, mostly now," he replied, with a twinkle in his eye that told where his watch had gone.

She held out her hand impulsively. "May I intrude again?" she asked with a little wistful smile.

"Why, anyone can come here," said Johnny, a little puzzled.

"Perhaps that is why so few do," she answered, her lips still smiling as her eyes saddened. "There are so many beautiful little bypaths that those on the highway pass by. I am going to turn in to rest now and then. Good-bye."

She pressed his hand and the turn of the path hid her, then Johnny sat down on the log again and a new dream began to form dimly like the shadows that fall on a hazy afternoon.

Thereafter the bypath held a new attraction for Johnny, the first human attraction he had known since he came to the city. Almost every day she would come about noon and linger till the dipping sun gilded the tree tops, then leave him, nor would she allow him to accompany her to the walk. They always met and parted in the bypath to suit the humor of her whim. Johnny grew to neglect all tasks that kept him after eleven and found many jobs that could be done after four. A fellow could always pick up something on the early newspaper wagons. A quarter or a half-dollar could be made at certain places where rather dubious errands were to be run, but Johnny was untouched by the tainted life he saw. His real life, his dream life, lay in the bypath where the bright sunlight fell and the breath of the wind was pure.

And so it fell that the rabbit grew to know her and would sometimes permit her slim fingers to stroke the soft fur between the lowering ears as it looked up at her with great human

eyes and delicately twitching nostrils. She watched the brown brood of the quail take their first whirling, booming flight, and they learned to pick the crumbs she scattered without hurrying off into the brush at the movement of her hand. The saucy jay ceased screaming and tried to tell her woodland gossip, which Johnny translated till she laughed softly, and the jay laughed, too, knowing she understood. Even a striped garter snake that occasionally writhed across the path, stopping with beady eyes and swift darting tongue, ceased to frighten her as Johnny tried a hypnotic game with it.

Then beautiful old age crept over summer. The little bypath was hung with cloth of gold as the leaves took on their fall shades. The morning air was sharp and vigorous and the heavy dew stayed late in the shadows, but the noon sunflood was molten gold from which the leaves stole their color. Then one day, above their heads, a leaf crumpled into brown parchment and fluttered down between them with a dry crackle. She looked at it a moment with frightened eyes, then a mist dimmed them, and through the mist the look of world-old sorrow crept, for in that one dead leaf she read the fate of summer and the gray, forewarning shadow of something else, for winter was coming to steal the dream of Arcady. Her soul had learned to blossom like a pure wild flower in the bypath, but now must be transplanted in the sickly hothouse of the city. Reality had wakened from a dream.

Johnny saw something of this in her face. For the first time he read the sorrow in her eyes, but not its age, for Johnny's soul was young and his heart and mind were pure. Day by day he watched her eyes with a cold, uncomprehending dread settling about his heart. The linnets departed, and at their going a silence fell upon the path. The rabbit's fur was noticeably thicker and he grew more logy in his movements. The quail grew bolder and scurried hither and thither in little flocks. Then the cloth of gold turned russet and the wind grew stronger,

plucking it to pieces bit by bit, and flung it wantonly upon the path, to lie sodden underfoot in the heavy dew or to crackle ghostly as the sun dried it.

One day, as they sat side by side on the fallen log—for slowly through their days together the distance had lessened—the golden mist turned gray and the boisterous wind shook the shivering branches with harsh laughter, and as its breath turned damp the first raindrop fell upon her cheek. She blanched with terror; her eyes, dark with shadows, widened, and she sprang to her feet shivering like the naked trees the wind sported with.

"What is it?" Johnny asked, springing quickly to her side.

"Winter," she whispered in an awed voice, "winter."

"But winter passes," he said slowly; "then spring comes—"

"Yes," she cried, "but it brings new flowers. 'The rose that once has bloomed forever dies.' You don't know it as I do; you are a man and many roses may bloom for you."

"I don't know what you mean," he said slowly.

She stirred a dead leaf at her feet. "See," she said, "the sun's kisses and the dew's breath drew that from the rough twig overhead. All summer long it swayed and danced with the soft wind, drunk with sunshine, nourished by the pure dew, all summer long. Then when the sun grew languorous and the dew heavy, it blushed with joy, never realizing that its very joy was killing it; and then the sky grew gray, and the wind tore at it till it was exhausted. In vain it clung, holding to its joy, till a fierce gust tore it loose, and now the rain will beat it into the sodden earth, never

again to dance in the glad summer sunshine."

Something dawned in his face and his arms made a little movement toward her, but she stepped back.

"The leaf has fallen, Johnny; the sodden ground always waited for it. The summer is over, the sunshine done. I did not know how sweet they were."

"I don't understand," he said quietly.

"Neither did I till just now. The sunshine of your presence brought back the tender leaves to a tree I thought dead. It lived again for one golden summer—your summer; but winter has come and I know the canker at the root. It cannot leaf again, even for you, Johnny."

She sobbed brokenly. He caught her in his arms and rained kisses on her face, kisses that tasted of the bitterness of her tears. Then fiercely, passionately, her lips responded, and she tore herself from his arms. It began to rain steadily and the wind sobbed through the trees as if in answer to her.

"Good-bye, Johnny," she said. "The winter will pass and another summer come to you, for you have the soul to wait for it—mine is the tree with the canker at the root that cannot leaf again." She turned away. "No," as he made to follow her, "we met—let us part on the bypath. Good-bye, Johnny boy."

The turn in the path hid her, leaving Johnny standing in the rain. The wind blew through the worn places in his shabby clothes and the sodden leaves oozed under his feet, for winter had come and a dream he but half understood had dissolved into a reality he understood still less.



HOW TO TREAT WOMEN:

Your mother—with reverence.

Your sister—with kindness.

Your wife—with seriousness.

Your stenographer—with champagne.

TURKEY TROT

By Daniel Carson Goodman

THE Bal Tabarin had its Saturday night crowd. Full-bosomed young models and their young men danced close; older visages, time-trodden, paint-covered, dull—with eyes careening speculatively along the balcony, into the faces of every white-shirted American that entered the din-filled ballroom, sat around in the deeper shadows; here and there, tourist ladies from America, securely ensconced for coming hours, disgustedly peered into the sweat-covered faces of the dancers.

Paris had not yet become "turkey trotted," and whenever a blonde slender girl with a pretty face, and a manner unmistakably American, came on the floor, everyone watched her movements as though she were some famous beauty of the "Revue." She was the signal for all eyes. "Americain—la danse Turkey Trot," they whispered. Then they would clap their hands and inhale more deeply their cigarettes, and her worn eyes would fairly crepitate with energy, her pale face would color, and she would constrainedly begin the slow rhythmic shoulder-shrugging gyrations.

Every café and dance hall in Paris, from L'Abbaye to the Bal Bullier, knew her blonde slender person and her young boy partner, a gaping-eyed, well-molded youth—a youth who showed quite plainly the slight taint of the hothouse frailness that comes from breeding.

They had just held the center of the floor, and now amidst the clapping of hands and admiring glances, pitched their way into the shadow of the balcony.

"Let's stop," she panted; "we don't want to give them too much of it."

"Yes, let's sit down and rest," he agreed. And the while he felt rather

proud of the searching glances that sought his partner, she dusted a daintily perfumed powder over her throat and shoulders.

"Aren't you tired?" he asked, as he bent over her.

"Yes, I'm awfully tired, boy," she sighed.

"Everyone certainly watches us, don't they?" His words fired with admiration as he spoke.

She smiled at him caressingly, as a mother might smile at her babe.

"You'll be gone by this time tomorrow night, won't you, Philip?"

He did not answer her. Instead he gazed into her eyes. Gradually there appeared to encompass him a storm of determination.

"Sadie, by God, I can't leave you!" he cried; "I can't and I won't. I don't care what mother and sister think. Let them go on without me. I've got my own income. Anyway, I tell you, I won't go without you."

The girl petted his soft hand for a long time. She seemed pleased that he should so spiritedly give vent to his regards for her. Then she said quietly:

"Now, boy, don't get excited. You'll go on to Lucerne with the folks. You'll be a dear, sweet old child and we'll write every day. But you'll go on, and you'll meet some young pretty thing at the National some night—and you'll turkey trot with her, and you'll be a happy boy."

"Sadie! How can you talk like that?" His eyes were staring hard ahead.

For a time they sat silent—the boy apparently inexpressibly wounded by the manner in which she had slithered

over his affection. He said at last: "I can't understand you, Sadie. Just think how wonderful it would be. For our honeymoon we'd go down to the Riviera. It's certainly swell down there. Then I know a son of Lord Reynolds and he could run us around in his car." He pleaded earnestly for her consent. "Oh, Sadie, think how great it would be for you to have all the dukes and earls running after you and wondering who you were."

As he went on, he pictured a rosy-hued future, a time full of bedizened riches—a conglomeration of ostentatious welfare, mirrored forth as enticingly as his love-clouded youthful brain would allow. And the girl listened intently to his words. When he spoke of Cairo the next winter and a tour into India, her eyes lost their dull lighting for a moment. But she soon arose from her chair in a restless, decisive fashion.

"Oh, Philip," she cried, "stop—stop—" Then with her voice full of determination—"Let's get some air, Philip. I want to talk to you."

No sooner had they started to pace the yellow-lighted pavement in front of the building, than she began immediately to speak. There was a certain harshness in her words that frightened the boy at her side.

"We've gone on like this for over a week, haven't we?" she began, while he, with the prescience that comes as a foreboding of a disappointment, grasped her hand, and stopped their arm-in-arm progress along the walk.

"Sadie, please don't say anything that—"

"Oh, let me go on. I owe this to my conscience anyway." Then she plunged into her intentions, almost fiercely. "You don't understand—you don't know what kind of a girl I am, Philip. Oh, yes, I've got the clothes that make me look swell—but—well, anyway, it ain't always the feathers . . . We're in a different class. You and I shouldn't have come together. Anyway, it would be wrong. You're a good boy, and you've got a home and a mother and a sister—to love and believe in you." He felt her hot hands gather about his

fingers. "Oh, listen to me—I'm talking rot," she said, with a laugh that rang derisively into the night.

"Sadie," the boy commanded, "look at me. I'm in love with you. You've got to marry me—you've got to. I know you've not had the life of some girls that stay at home. But I know you are all right. That's the main thing. I'd know it, if I only knew you an hour. And now there's a chance for you to get into another world. Why, Sadie, you don't know how beautiful you are. America isn't the place for you. Everybody's so coarse over there—always thinking of money and what everybody else will think. Why, we'd never go back—just stay on here. I'll bet you'll like that. Just think—London—Paris—Berlin—Gee, kiddie, don't that sound great? And we'd cut out this Bohemian stuff, too. I don't like it and I know you don't. We'd live decently. Why, Sadie, when I'm twenty-five, I get the rest of my estate—and then we'd be on easy street—and you would forget you ever were in a dance hall—and had a rotten mob looking at you. Oh, I know you'd do it now—if there was anything else."

He paused as if better to gather argument to portray his feeling for her. She placidly surveyed the glaring light in his eyes, the beseeching caress in his face. All her composure seemed to have returned to her.

"How old are you, Philip?" she asked.

"I'm—twenty-two, but I look a lot—"

"Oh, yes, but you're twenty-two, Philip. And now, how old am I?"

"Oh, you're looking so serious now—but I guess you're about twenty or twenty-one."

"Boy," she said slowly, calmly, "I'm twenty-three. And now I want to say what I came out here to say. I was faking the real reason a little while ago. Now I'll tell you straight. We've turkey trotted in every hole in this town, haven't we? We've worried your poor mother to death. While she was sitting in the hotel waiting for you, I've taken you and looked into your face—and crazed you. Did you know I knew what I was doing all the time?"

"Sadie!"

"Oh, yes, I knew—but I had to do that to keep things going. . . . Listen, Philip, I've been playing the devil with you—and you didn't know it. Don't think I don't know what it means to be living easy—Shepherd's Hotel in the winter—and Monte Carlo—and dukes—and all that—"

"Then why can't we do it, Sadie?"

She went on slowly, unmindful of the blue boyish eyes begging in front of her. "You're a dear boy, Philip—and some dancer. Yes, the best ever. Why, since I've been with you there's been times I wished—well, never mind what I wished. I just guess we don't dance in the same class. But what I want to say, Philip—is—that I'm using you. I've been using you ever since we met. The Moulin Rouge gave me fifty francs last night for our dance. Did you know that? The Galette people paid me—Maxim's paid me—I'll collect fifty from the Tabarin people here. You see I've been using you, Philip. I've had to do it. I just couldn't help it. Oh, you'd never understand. It's a disease I've got, I suppose. But I had to do it—just to get enough money to get back decently to New York. That's the whole thing in a nutshell. I'd have eaten my shoes if it meant the only way of getting back. Ever since I came over here, four months ago—it's been the only thing on my mind.

"Oh, you can't understand what the 'White Way' had done to some—of us. I guess it's something like the story about the moth and the flame."

Throughout this burst of self-rebuke, the boy stood rigid, his eyes never for an instant leaving the face of the girl. When she had finished, he took her gently in his arms. "So much the more reason, Sadie," he said, "for Shepherd's Hotel this winter."

Her answer came dull, with leaden tones:

"You poor, foolish boy—you could never understand."

Past midnight, at the Hotel Meurice, a boy, shaken and bent, walked into his mother's room.

She had been waiting for him.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come, Philip," she cried, as he clung to her in a manner strangely unnatural for him. "I've been worried about you—somehow more tonight than ever."

"Mother," he said, "you won't have to worry any more. Can't we go away in the morning—to Lucerne?" In the instant he became queerly agitated. "Oh, mother, I want to—so badly."

Two weeks later, a blonde girl with pale face showing a certain happiness for all the chiseled lines, and clothes that told of a nourished living, walked into the upstairs dining room of Rector's. She took a seat at one side of the cleared space in the middle of the floor and watched the crowd of dancers.

Each couple, as they passed her, some talking wildly, others with silent glances of understanding, and body to body, in perfect rhythm, brought to her mind a pang of recollection.

But for all her apparent loneliness, her eyes danced, and her body seemed to beckon acknowledgment to every syn-copated measure that came from the palm-hidden orchestra.

Then a tall brunette showgirl, with childish face, spied her, and was immediately by her side.

"Why, Sadie," the girl shouted. "Are you back? Gee, you look great. We all heard that you was marrying some rich guy with yachts and motor cars . . . Why, what's the matter?"

"Viola," Sadie muttered, "don't talk about it. You don't know how good it is—just to smell Forty-second Street again."



KISS—The triumph of matter over mind.

BACHELORS

By René Laidlaw

A BACHELOR enjoys no meal so much as that which he eats in a cosy home dining room with a charming hostess serving him. A married woman enjoys none so well as that whose dishes are selected by another—especially if she can trust his taste and isn't sure just what he will order. That is one reason why bachelors make love to married women, and why married women love bachelors.

GIVING is often the condition of receiving. But the most cynical single man is, on the whole, preferable to the married man who constantly reminds his wife of what he has given her.

ONE of the most delightful states of mind to which the average man is subject is uncertainty as to the exact sentiment entertained for him by a woman whom he admires, and whom he knows to like him, but whom he is not dead set upon winning for himself. One of the most unpleasant states is certainty that a woman deeply loves him when it is inconvenient or impossible for him to reciprocate. Yet often only a hair's breadth separates these two states—or only a few minutes in time.

A DILETTANTE told me yesterday: "I prefer black and white sketches by a clever artist to his finished paintings. They leave more to my imagination—which is a better traveler than any painter's brush." For the same reason, the bachelor interests matrons more than married men do. He, too, is unfinished; and every woman likes to imagine what she might have made of him—or what she may.



THE HAPPY MAN

By Jane Almad

HE was the envy of the town,
And always happy, so they said. . . .
One evening when the sun was down
He put a bullet through his head.

SIMOOM*

By August Strindberg

CHARACTERS

BISKRA (*an Arabian girl*)

YUSUF (*her lover*)

GUIMARD (*a lieutenant of Zouaves*)

PLACE: Algiers.

TIME: *The present.*

THE inside of a marabout, or shrine. In the middle of the floor stands a sarcophagus forming the tomb of the Mohammedan saint (also called "Marabout") who in his lifetime occupied the place. Prayer rugs are scattered over the floor. At the right in the rear is an ossuary or charnel house.

There is a doorway in the middle of the rear wall. It is closed with gates and covered by a curtain. On both sides of the doorway are loopholes. Here and there on the floor are seen little piles of sand. An aloe plant, a few palm leaves and some alfa grass are thrown together on one spot.

SCENE I

(BISKRA enters. The hood of her bur-nous is pulled over her head so that it al-most covers her face. She carries a guitar on her back. Throwing herself down in a kneeling position on one of the rugs, she begins to pray with her arms crossed over her breast. A high wind is blowing out-side.)

BISKRA

Lâ ilâha illâ 'llâh!

YUSUF (*entering quickly*)

Simoom is coming! Where is the Frank?

BISKRA

He'll be here in a moment.

YUSUF

Why didn't you stab him when you had a chance?

BISKRA

Because he is to do it himself. If I were to do it, our whole tribe would be killed, for I am known to the Franks as Ali, the guide, though they don't know me as Biskra, the maiden.

YUSUF

He is to do it himself, you say? How is that to happen?

BISKRA

Don't you know that Simoom makes the brains of the white people dry as dates, so that they have horrible visions which disgust them with life and cause them to flee into the great unknown?

YUSUF

I have heard of such things, and in the last battle there were six Franks who

*Translated and copyrighted by Edwin Björkman.

took their own lives before the fighting began. But do not place your trust in Simoom today, for snow has fallen in the mountains and the storm may be all over in half an hour.—Biskra! Do you know how to hate?

BISKRA

Know how to hate? My hatred is boundless as the desert, burning as the sun, and stronger than my love. Every hour of joy that has been stolen from me since the murder of Ali has been stored up within me like the venom back of a viper's tooth, and what Simoom cannot do, that I can do.

YUSUF

Well spoken, Biskra, and the task shall be yours. Ever since my eyes first fell upon you, my own hatred has been withering like alfa grass in the autumn. Take strength from me and become the arrow to my bow.

BISKRA

Embrace me, Yusuf, embrace me!

YUSUF

Not here, within the presence of the sainted one; not now—later, afterward, when you have earned your reward.

BISKRA

You proud Sheikh! You man of pride!

YUSUF

Yes—the maiden who is to carry my offspring under her heart must show herself worthy of the honor.

BISKRA

I—no one but me—shall bear the offspring of Yusuf! I, Biskra—the scorned one, the ugly one, but the strong one, too!

YUSUF

All right. I am now going to sleep beside the spring. Do I need to teach you more of the secret arts which you learned from Sidi-Sheikh, the great Marabout, and which you have practised at fairs ever since you were a child?

BISKRA

Of that there is no need. I know all the secrets needed to scare the life out of a cowardly Frank—the dastard who sneaks upon the enemy and sends the leaden bullet ahead of himself! I know them all—even the art of letting my voice come out of my belly. And what is beyond my art, that will be done by the sun, for the sun is on the side of Yusuf and Biskra.

YUSUF

The sun is a friend of the Moslemin, but not to be relied upon. You may get burned, girl! Take a drink of water first of all, for I see that your hands are shriveled, and—

(He lifts one of the rugs and steps down into a sort of cellar, from which he brings back a bowl filled with water; this he hands to BISKRA.)

BISKRA *(raising the bowl to her mouth)*

And my eyes are already beginning to see red—my lungs are parching—I hear—I hear—do you see how the sand is sifting through the roof—the strings of my guitar are crooning—Simoom is here! But the Frank is not!

YUSUF

Come down here, Biskra, and let the Frank die by himself.

BISKRA

First hell, and then death! Do you think I'll weaken? *(She pours the water on one of the sand piles.)* I'll water the sand, so that revenge may grow out of it, and I'll dry up my heart. Grow, O hatred! Burn, O sun! Smother, O wind!

YUSUF

Hail to you, mother, of Ben Yusuf—for you are to bear the son of Yusuf, the avenger—you!

(The wind is increasing. The curtain in front of the door begins to flap. A red glimmer lights up the room, but changes into yellow during the ensuing scene.)

BISKRA

The Frank is coming, and—Simoom is here! Go!

YUSUF

In half an hour you shall see me again.
(*Pointing toward a sand pile*) There is
your hourglass. Heaven itself is meas-
uring out the time for the hell of the in-
fidels! (*He goes down into the cellar.*)

SCENE II

(*BISKRA discovered. GUIMARD enters,
looking very pale; he stumbles, his mind is
confused, and he speaks in a low voice.*)

GUIMARD

Simoom is here!—What do you think
has become of my men?

BISKRA

I led them west to east.

GUIMARD

West—to east! Let me see! That's
straight east—and west! Oh, put me on
a chair and give me some water!

BISKRA (*leading GUIMARD to one of the
sand piles and making him lie down on
the floor with his feet on the sand*)
Are you comfortable now?

GUIMARD (*staring at her*)

I feel a little twisted. Put something
under my head.

BISKRA (*piling the sand higher under his
feet*)
There's a pillow for your head.

GUIMARD

Head? Why, my feet are down there
—aren't those my feet?

BISKRA

Of course!

GUIMARD

I thought so. Give me a stool now—
under my head.

BISKRA (*pulling out the aloe plant and
pushing it under GUIMARD's legs*)
There's a stool for you.

GUIMARD

And then water—water!

BISKRA (*filling the empty bowl with sand
and handing it to GUIMARD*)
Drink while it's cold.

GUIMARD (*putting his lips to the bowl*)

It is cold—and yet it does not still
my thirst! I cannot drink it—I abhor
water—take it away!

BISKRA

There's the dog that bit you!

GUIMARD

What dog? I have never been bitten
by a dog.

BISKRA

Simoom has shriveled up your memory
—beware the delusions of Simoom!
Don't you remember the mad grey-
hound that bit you during the last hunt
at Bab-el-Wad?

GUIMARD

The hunt at Bab-el-Wad? That's
right! Was it a beaver-colored—

BISKRA

Bitch? Yes.—There you see. And
she bit you in the calf. Can't you feel
the sting of a wound?

GUIMARD (*reaching a hand to feel his calf
and pricking himself on the aloe*)
Yes, I can feel it.—Water! Water!

BISKRA (*handing him the sand-filled
bowl*)

Drink, drink!

GUIMARD

No, I cannot! Holy Mother of God
—I have rabies!

BISKRA

Don't be afraid! I shall cure you,
and drive out the demon by the help of
music, which is all-powerful. Listen!

GUIMARD (*screaming*)

Ali! Ali! No music! I can't stand it!
And how could it help me?

BISKRA

If music can tame the treacherous
spirit of the snake, don't you think it

may conquer that of a mad dog? Listen!
(She sings and accompanies herself on the guitar.) Biskra-biskra, biskra-biskra, biskra-biskra! Simoom! Simoom!

YUSUF *(responding from below)*
 Simoom! Simoom!

GUIMARD
 What is that you are singing, Ali?

BISKRA
 Have I been singing? Look here—now I'll put a palm leaf in my mouth. *(She puts a piece of leaf between her teeth; the song seems to be coming from above.)* Biskra-biskra, biskra-biskra, biskra-biskra!

YUSUF *(from below)*
 Simoom! Simoom!

GUIMARD
 What an infernal jugglery!

BISKRA
 Now I'll sing!

BISKRA and YUSUF *(together)*
 Biskra-biskra, biskra-biskra, biskra-biskra! Simoom!

GUIMARD *(rising)*
 What are you, you devil who are singing with two voices? Are you man or woman? Or both?

BISKRA
 I am Ali, the guide. You don't recognize me because your senses are confused. But if you want to be saved from the tricks played by your sight and thought, you must believe in me—believe what I say and do what I tell you.

GUIMARD
 You don't need to ask me that, for I find everything to be as you say it is.

BISKRA
 There you see, you worshiper of idols!

GUIMARD
 I, a worshiper of idols?

BISKRA
 Yes; take out the idol you carry on your breast.
(GUIMARD takes out a locket.)

BISKRA
 Trample on it now, and then call on the only God, the Merciful One, the Compassionate One!

GUIMARD *(hesitating)*
 Saint Edward—my patron saint?

BISKRA
 Can he protect you? Can he?

GUIMARD
 No, he cannot! *(Waking up)* Yes, he can!

BISKRA
 Let us see!
(She opens one of the gates; the curtain flaps and the grass on the floor moves.)

GUIMARD *(covering his mouth)*
 Close the door!

BISKRA
 Throw down the idol!

GUIMARD
 No, I cannot.

BISKRA
 Do you see? Simoom does not bend a hair on me, but you, the infidel one, are killed by it! Throw down the idol!

GUIMARD *(throwing the locket on the floor)*
 Water! I die!

BISKRA
 Pray to the Only One, the Merciful and Compassionate One!

GUIMARD
 How am I to pray?

BISKRA
 Repeat after me.

GUIMARD
 Speak on!

BISKRA

There is only one God: there is no other God but Him, the Merciful, the Compassionate One!

GUIMARD

There is only one God: there is no other God but Him, the Merciful, the Compassionate One.

BISKRA

Lie down on the floor.
(GUIMARD *lies down unwillingly.*)

BISKRA

What do you hear?

GUIMARD

I hear the murmuring of a spring.

BISKRA

There, you see! God is one, and there is no other God but Him, the Merciful and Compassionate One!—What do you see?

GUIMARD

I can hear a spring murmur—I can see the light of a lamp—in a window with green shutters—on a white street—

BISKRA

Who is sitting at the window?

GUIMARD

My wife—Elise!

BISKRA

Who is standing behind the curtain with his arm around her neck?

GUIMARD

That's my son, Georges.

BISKRA

How old is your son?

GUIMARD

Four years on the day of St. Nicholas.

BISKRA

And he can already stand behind the curtain with his arm around the neck of another man's wife?

GUIMARD

No, he cannot—but it is he!

BISKRA

Four years old, you say, and he has a blond mustache?

GUIMARD

A blond mustache, you say? Oh, that's—my friend Jules.

BISKRA

Who is standing behind the curtain with his arm around your wife's neck?

GUIMARD

Oh, you devil!

BISKRA

Do you see your son?

GUIMARD

No, I don't see him any longer.

BISKRA (*imitating the tolling of bells on the guitar*)

What do you see now?

GUIMARD

I see bells ringing—I taste dead bodies—their smell in my mouth is like that of rancid butter—faugh!

BISKRA

Can't you hear the priest chanting the service for a dead child?

GUIMARD

Wait!—I cannot hear— (*Wistfully*) But do you want me to?—There!—I can hear it!

BISKRA

Do you see the wreath on the coffin they are carrying?

GUIMARD

Yes—

BISKRA

There are violet ribbons on it—and there are letters printed in silver—"Farewell, my darling Georges—from your father."

GUIMARD

Yes, that's it! (*He begins to cry.*) My Georges! Oh, Georges, my darling boy! Elise—wife—can't you console me?—Oh, help me! (*He is groping*)

around.) Elise, where are you? Have you left me? Answer! Call out the name of your love!

A VOICE (*coming from the roof*)
Jules! Jules!

GUIMARD
Jules? But my name is—what is my name? It is Charles! And she is calling Jules! Elise—my beloved wife—answer me—for your spirit is here—I can feel it—and you promised never to love anybody else—

(*The VOICE is heard laughing.*)

GUIMARD
Who is laughing?

BISKRA
Elise—your wife.

GUIMARD
Oh, kill me! I don't want to live any longer! Life sickens me like sauerkraut at Saint-Doux.—You there—do you know what Saint-Doux is? Lard! (*He tries to spit.*) Not a drop of saliva left! Water—water—or I'll bite you! (*The wind outside has risen to full storm.*)

BISKRA (*putting her hand to her mouth and coughing*)

Now you are dying, Frank! Write down your last wishes while there is still time. Where is your notebook?

GUIMARD (*taking out a notebook and a pencil*)

What am I to write?

BISKRA
When a man is to die, he thinks of his wife—and his child!

GUIMARD (*writing*)
"Elise—I curse you! Simoom—I die—"

BISKRA
And then sign it, or it will not be valid as a testament.

GUIMARD
What shall I sign?

BISKRA
Write: "Lâ ilâha illâ 'llâh."

GUIMARD (*writing*)
It is written.—And can I die now?

BISKRA
Now you can die—like a craven soldier who has deserted his people! And I am sure you'll get a handsome burial from the jackals that will chant the funeral hymn over your corpse. (*She drums the signal for attack on the guitar.*) Can you hear the drums—the attack has begun—on the Faithful, who have the sun and Simoom on their side—they are now advancing—from their hiding places. (*She makes a rattling noise on the guitar.*) The Franks are firing along the whole line—they have no chance to load again—the Arabs are firing at their leisure—the Franks are flying!

GUIMARD (*rising*)
The Franks never flee!

BISKRA
The Franks will flee when they hear the call to retreat.
(*She blows the signal for "retreat" on a flute which she has produced from under her burnous.*)

GUIMARD
They are retreating—that's the signal—and I am here—(*He tears off his epaulets.*) I am dead! (*He falls to the ground.*)

BISKRA
Yes, you are dead!—And you don't know that you have been dead a long time.

(*She goes to the ossuary and takes from it a human skull.*)

GUIMARD
Have I been dead?
(*He feels his face with his hands.*)

BISKRA
Long! Long! Look at yourself in the mirror here!
(*She holds up the skull before him.*)

GUIMARD

Ah! That's me!

BISKRA

Can't you see your own high cheek bones? Can't you see the eyes that the vultures have picked out? Don't you know that gap on the right side of the jaw where you had a tooth pulled? Can't you see the hollow in the chin where grew the beard that your Elise was fond of stroking? Can't you see where used to be the ear that your Georges kissed at the breakfast table? Can't you see the mark of the axe—here in the neck—which the executioner made when he cut off the deserter's head—

(GUIMARD, who has been watching her movements and listening to her words with evident horror, sinks down dead.)

BISKRA (who has been kneeling, feels his pulse; then she rises and sings)

Simoom! Simoom! (She opens both gates; the curtain flutters like a banner in the wind; she puts her hand up to her mouth and falls over backward, crying) Yusuf!

SCENE III

(BISKRA discovered. Also GUIMARD—dead. YUSUF comes out of the cellar.)

YUSUF (having examined the body of GUIMARD, he looks for BISKRA)

Biskra! (He discovers her and takes her up in his arms.) Are you alive?

BISKRA

Is the Frank dead?

YUSUF

If he is not, he will be. Simoom! Simoom!

BISKRA

Then I live! But give me some water!

YUSUF (carrying her toward the cellar) Here it is!—And now Yusuf is yours!

BISKRA

And Biskra will be your son's mother. O Yusuf, great Yusuf!

YUSUF

My strong Biskra! Stronger than Simoom!

CURTAIN



HUMMING BIRDS

By Arthur Stringer

THE ruby-throat has wings,
But the rose has none;
Up from the flower it swings,
And floats in the sun.

A flame with wings, it floats,
Like a flower that God set free,
Fashioned of silvery notes
Caught from a moonlit sea.

So to my life you came,
Once in your wayward flight;
And taught me to thrill at flame,
And left me to dream of light!

ROMANCE

By Arthur Ketchum

(Patio de Daraxa, Alhambra)

THE pomegranate's boughs are astir,
Where the scarlet blossoms blow.
Is it the voice of awakened bird,
Or the lingering ghost of a broken word
Said long and long ago?

For the moon lies white on the court,
And the shadows are thick between
The columns of the dim arcade
The wizard Moorish builders made
For a forgotten queen.

This was the place that she sought,
Weary of song and light,
Where the wind moved soft as a prayer,
And the fountain swayed in the scented air
Like a white flower of the night.

And here, where the starry dark
Wrought magic and mysteries,
Who knew if a proud queen stormed and wept
There in the palace that reveled or slept,
Behind the lattices?

The night is astir with its dream;
The moon is on tower and wall.
Hush! In the shadow something stirred!
A bough bent by a rustling bird?
Or a sound of a light footfall?



THE best man wins—at a wedding.



IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery, but the only royal road to fame.

L'AVARE

Par Han Ryner

LORSQUE, au bras de son mari, Mme Geneviève Serre se promenait sur l'Esplanade, grande, souple et lente, le visage vaguement éclairé d'un sourire, les jeunes gens de la petite ville suivaient d'un long regard cette statue qui marche. Ils la trouvaient belle, malgré la sobriété de ses lignes, et leurs rêves émus lui faisaient une ardente escorte.

Elle ignorait les désirs soulevés sur ses pas et, si elle eût deviné leur accompagnement, elle s'en fût irritée comme d'injures. Elle était restée la rougissante et irritable pensionnaire qui, ne comprenant jamais avec netteté, se fâche d'un mot ou d'un regard.

Elle eut une fille. Elle l'aima d'abord comme une poupée qu'on lui permettait sans se moquer d'elle.

Dès que la petite eut deux ans, les vingt ans de Geneviève trouvèrent en elle une camarade, quelqu'un que sa sottise n'étonnait pas et qu'elle ne pouvait soupçonner de raillerie. Les deux enfants passaient les journées à gazouiller ensemble, oiseaux qui n'ont rien à dire et qui chantent.

Pourtant Geneviève avait une passion, l'avarice. Passion froide, étroite et puérile, comme tout ce qui logeait en ce cœur de grelottement, en ce cerveau de puérité et d'étroitesse. Avarice sans élan vers le gain, toute repliée dans la crainte de perdre.

Un jour, un homme hardi—un lieutenant célèbre par ses bonnes fortunes et ses duels—s'écria en la voyant passer dans son calme irritant :

—C'est moi qui vous la réveillerais, la belle endormie !

Elle, sans comprendre les paroles, mais indignée du ton, se pencha vers son mari :

—Paul, je crois qu'on vient de m'insulter, dit-elle.

Le mari, se retournant, marcha à l'homme qu'indiquait le doigt ganté et, au milieu des promeneurs émus, gifla le lieutenant Paul Bertral.

Pendant que les témoins discutaient les conditions de la rencontre, Paul Serre conduisit sa femme à la gare. Il l'envoyait à la campagne chez ses parents, pour lui éviter de trop rudes émotions : maintenant il croyait qu'elle pouvait s'émouvoir, puisqu'il avait vu son œil allumé par la colère, un instant.

Elle avait retrouvé son universelle indifférence, déjà. Sur le marchepied du wagon, tandis que son mari l'embrassait avec les honneurs et les tendresses d'un adieu possible, l'impeccable ménagère qui, perdue en de graves réflexions, n'avait plus prononcé un mot depuis la scène de violences, faisait tout à coup, de sa voix douce, cette suprême recommandation :

—Paul, tu trouveras pendu, à la troisième tête du porte-manteau de ta chambre, un pantalon gris. Mets-le pour te battre. . . . Tu comprends, le gris, ça se lave. . . .

Les adversaires, l'épée au bout du bras allongé, s'observent quelques secondes. Puis, d'un même mouvement hésitant, ils marchent l'un sur l'autre. Les pointes se touchent, frémissantes. Les témoins, le cou tendu, regardent, songeant à leur responsabilité. Ils ont pâli tous les quatre, car Paul Bertral vient de se fendre avec une rapidité foudroyante. Le coup a été paré juste à temps, et aussi la riposte, très dangereuse. Maintenant les épées se heurtent, se croisent, vont, reviennent, touchent presque, sans relâche, sans calcul, brutales, maladroitement, comme ivres. . . .

Un nuage qui cachait le soleil s'envole dans le vent des hauteurs. Une lumière brusque frappe et éblouit les yeux du lieutenant. A cette seconde précise, Paul Serre se fendait. Paul Bertral était touché au bras. Tout allait pour le mieux : la blessure était insignifiante et "l'honneur était satisfait."

Tandis qu'on rédige le procès-verbal, le mari de Geneviève se précipite au télégraphe et, dans une fièvre joyeuse, écrit la dépêche suivante :

"Bertral blessé. T'embrasse mille fois.
PAUL."

Par malheur, on ne télégraphie guère les signes de ponctuation et l'employé qui transcrit fit des deux phrases une seule phrase :

"Bertral blessé t'embrasse mille fois."

La naïve Mme Serre, furieuse du tutoiement et des baisers du lieutenant, télégraphie à son mari :

"Bertral m'adresse télégramme injurieux.
GENEVIÈVE."

On juge de la colère de Serre. Ce matin insultait de nouveau sa femme ! Après une première affaire ! Et publiquement ! L'outrage était connu de nombreux employés qui, dans les bureaux ; sournement, riaient et qui, tout à l'heure, en ville, raconteraient, en gens qui respectent le secret professionnel, avec des chuchotements, des réticences et des clins d'yeux qui enveniment. Mais non, ils n'auraient même pas besoin de parler. Bertral n'avait commis l'infamie qu'afin de pouvoir s'en vanter. Le lâche ! c'était sa façon de prendre sa revanche ! Eh bien, Serre le tuerait cette fois.

Justement, le voilà, le lieutenant, sur la terrasse du grand café de l'Esplanade, au milieu de camarades et d'amis. Il parle haut, et il rit, mais il rit ! . . . Il a rencontré les yeux de Serre qui marche sur lui, tout droit et très vite, et, brusquement, il a cessé de rire.

Bertral se demande, étonné, ce que peut bien lui vouloir son adversaire de ce matin qui s'avance, le regard violent, les traits contractés. Il sent une main tomber, lourde, sur son visage. Il se

lève en criant, les yeux injectés de sang, le poing gauche fermé. On se jette entre eux. On bouscule Serre, qui est devenu l'objet de l'indignation universelle.

Un médecin parle d'un brusque coup de folie, inexplicable.

— Il n'y a pas à expliquer, mais à se venger ! dit Bertral, les dents serrées.

Un avoué déclare qu'il faut traîner l'agresseur en justice.

— J'aime mieux le tuer ! gronde le lieutenant.

Il fut difficile de trouver des témoins pour ce second duel, qu'on prévoyait tragique. De tout jeunes gens, poussés par la curiosité et la vanité, s'offrirent d'eux-mêmes et furent acceptés, faute d'autres.

Bertral voulut se battre dès le lendemain. Sa blessure était peu profonde et, d'ailleurs, il se servait de la main gauche aussi bien que de la main droite. Le combat eut lieu au pistolet, à quinze pas, tir à volonté.

Les deux spectres noirs placés en face l'un de l'autre visèrent d'un même mouvement et tirèrent au même instant. Bertral fut blessé à l'épaule. Serre reçut la balle dans la tête et tomba foudroyé.

Devant la cour d'assises où Bertral passait pour la forme, Geneviève termina une déposition nonchalante par ces paroles :

— Il y a peut-être un peu de ma faute. Mais vous comprenez, monsieur le président : une honnête femme qui se croit insultée ne peut pas réfléchir.

Le président dit avec indulgence :

— Le grand coupable est le style télégraphique. Il est regrettable que M. Serre n'ait pas écrit : "Bertral est blessé. Je t'embrasse mille fois." De la sorte, il n'y avait plus d'équivoque, plus d'injure apparente, plus de malheur.

La belle et froide Geneviève eut un hochement de tête approbateur. Mais ensuite on la vit compter sur ses doigts. Et elle déclara enfin :

— Vous avez raison, monsieur le président . . . mais la dépêche avait juste dix mots, et ça aurait coûté deux sous de plus !



THE DRAMA IN DECADAL RETROSPECT

By George Jean Nathan

THERE are two ways in which a critic may procure for himself a reputation for trustworthiness and rationality. The one way is to concur consistently in the public's momentary mental attitudes; the other is to abide stanchly and unremittingly by the public's fondled traditions. For a man who earns his living by criticism, who looks upon criticism as a routine office occupation, like bookkeeping or cleaning inkwells, these ways are by all means the wisest and safest to pursue. Not only do they preclude the possibility of one's losing one's source of livelihood, as well as the probability of frequent callings to account by disgruntled artists and other advertisers, but in addition they secure for the critic the position and adulation that is the plump portion of all who, to speak generally, appreciate that a gentle appraisal of "Years of Discretion" is the better part of valor and that "Eva," with all its faults, looked at from another point of view is "Ave"—all hail!

There are two ways in which a critic may win for himself a reputation for prejudice and dubious judgment. The one way is unsentimentally to accept things mainly for what they are worth; the other is unemotionally to express the opinions thus deduced. These latter ways are provocative of large and passionate discomfort. In the first place, they are certain to bring down upon the critic's head the stigmatizing crimination of youthfulness. In the second place, they are logically certain to invest the critic with an odious air of attempting to be spectacularly original. And,

in the third place, they may in due time succeed in alienating him from his sustaining loaf and jug. For these excellent reasons, the latter practices are to be approached cautiously and not without some bonny misgivings. Had George Bernard Shaw been an American, undoubtedly he would have been put back on general reportorial work (probably assigned to cover the Ohio Society's banquet) the afternoon after his first gutting criticism (of Grundy's "Slaves of the Ring") appeared in the paper. Had Sarcey been an American, his refusal of the Legion of Honor, on the ground that its acceptance might influence his critical honesty in the future, unquestionably would have been looked upon by the public and his colleagues as merely a gaudy stratagem to conceal his dishonesty in some other unsuspected direction.

The metempirical attitude toward dramatic criticism is a strange and awesome coccus. It labors in devious manners its machinery to massage. In France, for instance, the attitude is such that any critic who writes of Hervieu unfavorably will at no time and under no circumstances be received into the Academy. Inasmuch as almost all the French newspaper critics are known publicly to be unchaste (many of them, like Pierre Wolff, De Flers, Félix Duquesnel and Pierre Veber are admittedly merely press agents for one another's wares; De Flers even went so far as to persuade his present employer to discharge the regular critic so that he, De Flers, might assume the post and thus see to it that his own plays did not

lack sufficient praise), what criticism of comparative worth there is in Gaul is limited to the periodical publications. And in the latter, only that modern criticism that is pilfered bodily from Geoffroy's elaborate "*Cours de Littérature Dramatique*," written about eighty years ago, is regarded as fearless, constructive and sane. The policy of hush is beloved of the Gauls. Only that which is favorable to the dramatic scribes of La Belle France is regarded as honest criticism. Thus, although even to a child's eye it was evident that the Russian influence of Tolstoi in the theme of forgiveness for adultery, of the woman's right to happiness, was to be clearly observed in the French drama of the last years of the nineteenth century and more recently, in "*Le Pardon*" of Lemaître, in "*La Déserteuse*" of Brieux, in "*Le Bercaïl*" of Bernstein, in "*Maman Colibri*" of Bataille, it was the rule of public opinion in France that, for reasons of patriotism, the fact should be perfumed with critical silence.

In England, the public expects of its present critics (ah, Shaw and Beerbohm, why is your light shed no more o'er Britain?) that they devote themselves more assiduously to the cultivation of actors' reputations than to the cultivation of drama. The actor is considered very gravely in England. Indeed, he is at times even looked upon as being of some help to the art of the drama. As we over here only vaguely know, the British public also expects of its theatrical commentators that they greet with condescension any foreign products (especially American) that are offered up for their august inspection. I say "only vaguely know" because, despite the speech that comes periodically into contact with our tympani, it is not so much the British critic who is hostile to imported wares as it is his reading public. The British critic is, on the whole, an upright and enlightened member of the guild—but he is a very, very circumspect member. He values his reputation even more greatly than a demi-mondaine values hers. He knows well that even the American Charles Klein is an apter

theatrical plumber than the British Horace Vachell—that "*The Third Degree*" (or "*Find the Woman*," as it was called overseas) is a more interesting exhibition than "*Jelf's*" a block away; yet he knows just as well that it would be silly for him to say so. And, with a weather eye to his standing in the community, he shelters himself under the cover of the two practices wherefrom reputations may be coaxed as nicely in the long shadows of Nelson's column as in the long shadows of Longacre Square.

Through this uncanny subterfuge of indicating some of the weaknesses of critics the globe around, I am seeking indirectly and craftily to intimate my own intrepid fearlessness, incomparable honesty and unquestionable superiority over everyone else in the civilized world before hazarding to publish my annual statistical tables of the season's ten best plays, ten best actors and ten best actresses. This latter is so foolhardy a set of gymnastics that to attempt to engage in it without previously giving hint to the public of one's enormous virtues, physical chastity, home instincts, table manners and virginal character is to set oneself down bluntly as a vain-glorious and conceited Gascon. Now that I have cleared the way, let us proceed.

It is the custom, after an hebdomadal deploring of the quality of drama throughout the autumn, winter and spring, to declare in one's résumé of the theatrical year that it was not such a bad season after all. This is evidently on the same principle that one should speak well even of one's relatives at their funerals. Therefore, as profoundly as I deplore consistency—for a ceaseless consistency in this ever-changing day is to me synonymous with a grooved mind, old age and a blind and stubborn adherence to one's opinions of yesterday—I feel compelled to keep on saying that the preceding dramatic year was, so far as the quality of its proscenium fare was concerned, a keenly depressing one. Indeed, so depressing that, after calling myself into consultation several times, I have encountered difficulty in persuading myself to agree to a chronicle of as

many as ten awards. Three or four awards I make gladly—aye, even with something of a huzzah from the heart; one or two more not too unwillingly; but the required balance hardly with a generous laurel-bringing hand. Exclusive of farce, frank melodrama and stage pageants, I submit herewith my annual idea of what, all things considered, seem to me, in the relative order of their worth, to be comparatively the ten most meritorious dramatic exhibits of the season of 1912-1913:

1. Fanny's First Play (Shaw)
2. The Poor Little Rich Girl (Gates)
3. Our Wives (Mandel and Krafft out of Fulda)
4. Anatol (Schnitzler)
5. Milestones (Knoblauch and Bennett)
6. Rutherford and Son (Sowerby)
7. Damaged Goods (Brieux)
8. A Perplexed Husband (Sutro)
9. Romance (Sheldon)
10. The Blindness of Virtue (Hamilton)

But, I hear you protest, "Anatol" is not a "play," but a series of episodes. To which I make impolite retort that in these eyes "Anatol" is quite as much a "play" as is "Milestones"—my idea of what a play is being somewhat different from the idea of Mr. William Archer and other implacable technicians. But, I hear the protest ring, you have said analogously that "Damaged Goods" is not a good play! And, having tripped me up, as you fondly believe, you grin widely. Very well, so be it. But "Damaged Goods" is a poor play not because of its digressive and unrelated construction, not because of the proximity of its dialogue (such pseudo-defects are now and again the mark of excellent drama), but because of failure finally to exploit its theme, or thematic intent, through its central dramatic characters. God wot, I believe that a play need know no indelible rules, no marked and bell-buoyed channels, no commandments; yet it were silly to believe that a play need know no devices, however variable and nameless, for making it convincing, unmonotonous, congruous and consistently interesting. And remember, I beg of you, that I have submitted not ten superlatively valid dramas, but simply the ten plays that

ranked in this estimate above the other presentations of the year. The play "Chains," had it not been for the crude adaptation that was meted out to it, would have merited a position high in the table; so, too, would have "Hindle Wakes" found a place for itself in the list had its author invested his dénouement with a shrewder and fresher logic. A photograph of the folk of Lancashire was not enough, nor was the commendable building of the script. The externals were here; the internals, the all-vitalizing ideas, were not.

"Romance," intrinsically a machine-made and theatrically transparent exhibit, explains its position through the deftness of much of its dialogic writing, the several lustrous dramatic passages which Mr. Sheldon incorporated in it and its pleasant, if entirely patent, resident impression recalling Mr. Ketchum's little "Memory":

Day long, sometimes, it seems that I forget,
And in my crowded hours comes no thought
of you,

So much there is to plan, so much to do—
My plot to till, my house in order set—
So goes my day—and then—O marvel yet!—
A street tune or a name—a sundown hue,
And you are with me, as of old I knew,
And I am singing, though my eyes are wet.

If my choices do not please you, you are at liberty to forward complaints and corrections to this magazine—Drawer L. I have employed five beautiful blondes to answer my out-of-town correspondents and to call personally upon all of my dissatisfied flock who reside in New York City. I anticipate at least one hundred indignant letters attesting to my paranoia on the grounds that I have omitted "The New Sin" or "The Governor's Lady" or something else. Incidentally and quite irrelevantly, speaking of "The Governor's Lady," I wonder how many who have enthused over the quality of its drama know that they may find that what is probably the most valid scene in the play—the divorce scene 'twixt the husband and his frumpy wife—was handled much more adroitly a long time before by Jules Lemaître in "Le Député Leveau" and by Maurice Donnay (1902) in "L'Autre Danger," as well as much more vibrantly and boldly as

far back as 1827 in the "Mère et la Fille" of Mazères, and more incisively in the somewhat more distantly removed "Richard Darlington" of the elder Dumas?

By all odds the best melodrama of the season and, probably second to Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes," the best of all American-made melodramas, was the "Within the Law" of Bayard Veiller. The best dramatic spectacle was Parker's "Joseph and His Brethren"; the best farce, "Ready Money," by Montgomery. And, rebuffing any attempt at precise classification, we have "The Yellow Jacket" of Hazelton and Benrimo as the season's principal noteworthy curiosity.

Exclusive of the Irish Players, whose labors I considered in detail last year, I find that among the so-called unstarred and unfeatured actors, the following ten, in the order specified, seem deserving of highest praise:

1. Brandon Tynan (in "Joseph and His Brethren")
2. Lennox Pawle (in "Liberty Hall")
3. Emmett Corrigan (in "The Governor's Lady")
4. Herbert Lomas (in "Hindle Wakes")
5. Carl Lyle (in "A Scrape o' the Pen")
6. A. E. Anson (in "Romance")
7. Charles Dalton (in "The Case of Becky")
8. A. G. Poulton (in "The New Sin")
9. Basil Hallam (in "The Blindness of Virtue")
10. Holbrook Blinn (in the Princess plays)

I have finally selected these actors out of a lengthy chronicle of merit that included the names of Gustav von Seyffertitz in "The Argyle Case," William Norris in "A Good Little Devil," Arthur Byron in "The High Road," Howard Kyle in "Joseph and His Brethren," Edward Ellis in "Fear," Herbert Druce in "A Perplexed Husband," William Raymond in "The Mind-the-Paint Girl," William Mack in "Within the Law," Cyril Keightley and O. P. Heggie in "The New Sin," Ernest Stallard in "Trial Marriage," Bert Williams in the cab scene in the Ziegfeld "Follies" (a fine piece of work), Henry Kolker in "Our Wives," William Courtleigh in "Mere Man," Frank Sheridan in "The Unwritten Law," Ferdinand Gottschalk

in "The New Secretary," and George Fawcett in "A Man's Friends."

Among the unstarred and unfeatured actresses in the numerous productions, I nominate the following:

1. Edyth Olive (in "Rutherford and Son")
2. Mathilde Cottrelly (in "The Five Frankforters")
3. Pauline Frederick (in "Joseph and His Brethren")
4. Mary Boland (in "A Perplexed Husband")
5. Viola Dana (in "The Poor Little Rich Girl")
6. Kate Carlyon (in "Fanny's First Play")
7. Doris Keane (in "Anatol")
8. Florine Arnold (in "Mrs. Christmas Angel")
9. Willette Kershaw (in "Any Night")
10. Doris Lytton (in "The Blindness of Virtue")

As in the instance of the actors, I have not included in my calculations the actresses in the company of Irish Players, of whom Eileen O'Doherty and Sara Allgood are still revealed as the most talented. Miss Keane, after her excellent Mimi in "Anatol," was featured in "Romance" and legitimately justified the advancement. Among the other meritorious performances on the part of the unstarred and the unfeatured were those of Olive Wyndham in "Chains," Lolita Robertson in "Fine Feathers," Christine Norman in "Peg o' My Heart," Mary Pickford in "A Good Little Devil," Thyrza Norman in "Rutherford," and Jane Cowl and Florence Nash in "Within the Law." Probably it is your opinion that I have given little sixteen-year-old Miss Dana a superabundantly elevated station in the table. You will eloquently assure me about such things as "the technique of acting," "inspiration in acting," "the mellowing quality of experience in acting," "the mechanics of acting" and so on. Well, well, maybe you are right. Maybe what little Miss Dana does is not real acting, really artistic acting, technically correct acting. Maybe not. I'm sure I don't know. But whatever it is, it is unaffected, stirring, unstilted, compelling, of distinct enunciation, of unartificial mien and thorough effect. And that is sufficient for me. The good gods deliver me from two kinds of actresses—

the kind that are announced to be technically perfect and the "popular" kind that Leonard Merrick characterizes thus in the instance of his overly press-agented Peggy Harper:

The editor of "Mother and Girls" begs for the privilege of including her views among "other notable English women's" upon the female suffrage movement; in "Answers to Correspondents," Student of Drama is told: "Miss Peggy Harper's favorite flower is the lily of the valley"; the "Beholder" writes to ask her to contribute to the department "How I Study a Part"; her picture gazes at you from every shop window and every newspaper and magazine, until one showing her in a reefer and pilot cap, smiling, with a tilted chin, and hands behind her back, has underneath the words: "Miss Peggy Harper, whose engagement to * * * was recently announced. Like her fiancé, Miss Harper has always been devoted to yachting."

Of the musical plays of the season, the following, in the order named, impressed me most agreeably:

1. Oh! Oh! Delphine
2. The Purple Road
3. All for the Ladies
4. The Merry Countess
5. The Woman Haters
6. The Count of Luxembourg
7. The Sunshine Girl
8. The Lady of the Slipper
9. The Firefly
10. Eva

It is a task involving an almost superhuman ingenuity to arrive at the ten worst regularly produced theatrical exhibitions of the season. Girding up my loins, I have time and again hurled myself upon the problem only to be driven back by sheer strength of numbers. Permit me, therefore, in the pursuance of my duty, to present you with a bracketed list. I see no other way out.

1. { The Spiritualist
C. O. D.
2. { An Aztec Romance
What Ails You?
3. { What Happened to Mary
Widow by Proxy
4. { The Indiscretion of Truth
Just Like John
5. { The Unwritten Law
The Old Firm
6. { The Question
A Rich Man's Son
7. { Alibi Bill
June Madness
8. { The Master Mind
Bachelors and Benedicts

9. { The Ne'er-Do-Well
Blackbirds
10. { Ann Boyd
Are You a Crook?

The most beautiful scenic picture divulged during the season was the view of the marble pavilion of the palace of the Empress, greenish white in a bath of moonrays, in "The Daughter of Heaven." Infinitely lovelier, however, although patently not to be catalogued in scenery statistics, was the picture of the flower boat dreaming its way down the silver river of love, conjured up so wondrously for the imagination in "The Yellow Jacket." The most effective dramatic speech was that of the diseased girl of the streets in the final act of "Damaged Goods," in reply to her interrogator's: "You gave them as good as you got, didn't you, though?"

THE GIRL (*gaily*). Oh, I had my tit for tat! I suppose you'd like to have that, too? Before they carted me off there, the day I found out I was in for it, I was going home in a pretty temper, when who do you think I met in the street but my old boss! I was that glad to see him! Now, thinks I to myself, you're going to pay me what you owe me—with interest, too! I just winked at him: oh, it didn't take long, I can tell you. (*Tragically*) Then, when I left him I don't know what came over me—I felt half mad. I took on everyone I could, for anything or for nothing! As many as I could, all the youngest and the best-looking—well, I only gave 'em back what they gave me! Now somehow I don't care any more; where's the use in pulling long faces about things? It only makes me laugh. Other women, they do just the same; but then they do it for their bread and butter, d'ye see! A girl must live even if she is ill, eh?

The wittiest speech by all odds was that of the Gallic gallant, Duvallet, in "Fanny's First Play," in reply to Mrs. Knox's protestations as to her daughter's conduct and speculations as to what the Frenchman would think of similar conduct on the part of his own children. I quote in small part:

Ah, but, madam, my daughters are French girls. That is very different. It would not be correct for a French girl to go about alone and speak to men as English and American girls do. That is why I so immensely admire the English people. . . . I intend to have my daughters educated in England. Nowhere else in the world but in England could I have met at a variety theater a charming young lady of perfect respectability and enjoyed a dance with her

at a public dancing saloon. . . . If you were a Frenchman, stifled with prudery, hypocrisy and the tyranny of the family and the home, you would understand how an enlightened Frenchman admires and envies your freedom, your broad-mindedness and the fact that the home life can hardly be said to exist in England. You have made an end of the despotism of the parent; the family council is unknown to you; everywhere in this island one can enjoy the exhilarating, the soul-liberating spectacle of men quarreling with their brothers, defying their fathers, refusing to speak to their mothers. . . . Oh, Mrs. Knox, if only your military genius were equal to your moral genius, if that conquest of Europe by France which inaugurated a new age after the Revolution had only been an English conquest, how much more enlightened the world would have been now! We, alas, can only fight. France is unconquerable. We impose our narrow ideas, our prejudices, our obsolete institutions, our insufferable pedantry on the world by brute force—by that stupid quality of military heroism which shows how little we have evolved from the savage; nay, from the beast. We can charge like bulls; we can spring on our foes like gamecocks; when we are overpowered by treason we can die fighting like rats. And we are foolish enough to be proud of it! Why should we be? Do we progress? Can you civilize the gamecock? Is there any future for the rat? We can't even fight intelligently: When we lose battles it is because we have not sense enough to know when we are beaten. At Waterloo, had we known we were beaten, we should have retreated, tried another plan and won the battle. But no; we were too pigheaded to admit that there was anything impossible to a Frenchman. . . . Think of your great Wellington; think of his inspiring words, when the lady asked him whether British soldiers ever ran away. "All soldiers run away, madam," he said; "but if there are supports for them to fall back on it does not matter." Think of your illustrious Nelson, always beaten on land, always victorious at sea, where his men could not run away. You are not dazzled and misled by false ideals of patriotic enthusiasm; your honest and sensible statesmen demand for England a two-power standard, even a three-power standard, frankly admitting that it is wise to fight three to one; while we, fools and braggarts as we are, declare that every Frenchman is a host in himself, and that when one Frenchman attacks three Englishmen he is guilty of an act of cowardice comparable to that of the man who strikes a woman.

The next wittiest speech, to my mind, was that of Jim Benziger in "The New Sin":

The vice [drinking] gave you up! A temptation has got a soul. A temptation is a very fastidious "ism." You gave way too easily, too abjectly, and the temptation deserted you as an unworthy opponent. If a very bad boxer challenges again and again for a championship,

and is constantly beaten, the time comes when he can't get another match with the champion. He doesn't want to give up trying for the championship, but the champion ignores his impudent claims. You don't drink alcohol because it has given you a sound thrashing and won't be bothered with you any more.

The most gracefully written speech was that of the Italian opera singer Cavallini in "Romance," in which she recites to her current lover, Van Tuyl, her first meeting with love in the long ago:

Dere vas a young man come sing vit us—Beppo 'is name vas—Beppo Aquilone. 'E vas 'an some—an' 'e 'ad nize voice—oh, very light, you know—but steel *simpatico*. Ve stan' together-r an' have—I dunno—vone, two duets. An' so eet goes for two—t'ree veeks, an' every time 'e smile an' look at me my 'eart is full vid gr-r-reat beeg vishes an' I feel like everyt'ing in all de vor-r-rld is new an' bor-r-rn again—an' so vone evening 'e tells me dat 'e love me—an' I feel 'is 'ot br-r-reat' like fir-r-re upon my face—an' de beating of 'is 'eart like str-r-rong blows 'ere—against my own—an' den 'e sleep. But I—I do not sleep. I lie so steel an' quiet, an' in my mind I have vone t'ought—"Is dis vhat people mean vhen dey say—lo-ove?" An' so de 'ours go by, vhat, an' de night is feenish, an' a—a—'ow you say?—a long, theen piece of sunlight, it c-r-reep in through my leetle window an' it shine on Beppo vhere 'e lie. An', oh, 'e look so young—an' den de sunlight—'ow you say?—eet tease him, an' so he half vake up, an' 'e veenk 'is eyes an' say, "Ah! Rita, *ti amo!*" an' den 'e sigh an' put 'is 'ead 'ere—on my shoulder—like a leetle bab-ee dat is tir-r-red, an' 'e go to sleep again. Ah—oh! I put my ar-r-rm about 'im an' I smile an' t'ink, "For lo-ove I vaited all night long, an' vid de day—it come!"

The most bromidic on the part of a playwright of position, the speech of Hawley in Mr. Augustus Thomas's play, "Mere Man." Says Hawley, in reply to a woman's statement that a man's "vote is just a piece of paper; the weakest of us could cast that":

Yes, and the weakest of you would. This dollar I hold in my hand is only a piece of paper. It's good because there's a dollar's worth of gold behind it. A man's vote is good because there's one fighting man back of it. Every law that hasn't a majority of the physical force behind it is a joke. The law says your property and your person must be safe from attack. Only force makes it respected. You say Mrs. Fanwood pays taxes. Willingly? No; "Pay them—or we collect by force." That's the one definition of government that stands the acid. It may impose taxes and force their collection. Force! That servant you arrested for theft—her wages are safe because the law will get them

by force if necessary. You take your laces from her trunk because a constable—a representative of force—was present.

The most amusing scene occurred in "A Scrape o' the Pen," when the stern head of the family, after his regular evening custom, began reading from the Bible to his bored household. On this particular occasion, the reading, from the first book of Chronicles, was as follows. Imagine the passage read seriously, with painful slowness, and in a hallowed drone:

Adam, Sheth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, Henoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth. The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashchenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, Put and Canaan. And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtechah. And the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be mighty upon the earth. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Ananiam, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, and Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Zidon his firstborn, and Heth—

And so on, name upon name and begat upon begat.

The scene most forcible from a theatrical point of view was that at the close of the second act of "Damaged Goods," where the wife learns that her husband is the victim of a malignant disease which he has transmitted to their baby. Almost equally effective, in the same theatrical way, was the scene in the third act of "Within the Law," where the police, convinced at length of the truth of Mary Turner's statement, suddenly have the body of the murdered man revealed to them by the revolving searchlight from a tower in Madison Square; immediately to be baffled again by the girl's declaration that the man was a thief and was justifiably shot by the man whose house he had invaded. The best dramatic "curtain" was that achieved at the end of the second act of "The Poor Little Rich Girl," where the physician is felt through the child's waning delirium, as he drags her bodily into the window of his hobby-crowded barn, to cry exultantly: "I've pulled her

through! I've pulled her through!" The best "curtain" line seems to me to have been that written by Elizabeth Jordan into the close of the first act of her "Lady from Oklahoma." "You see," says the wife to her adviser, who questions the worth of the wife's struggle to win back her husband from a gay baggage's toils—"you see, he isn't only my husband. He's all the children I never had."

The most realistic scene was that devised by Mr. Belasco showing a Childs' Restaurant in the epilogue to "The Governor's Lady." The best "interior," the apartment shown by Mr. Belasco in the first act of "Years of Discretion." The best scenic effect, that showing the gradual vanishing of the child's delirium at the beginning of the final act of "The Poor Little Rich Girl." The pleasantest music show melody was one called "You Don't Know" in "Tantalizing Tommy." The best scenic device revealed on the music show stage, the express train-automobile race of "The Honeymoon Express," although this scene in no degree approached the truly remarkable train-automobile race scene in Lincoln J. Carter's old melodrama "Bedford's Hope." By all odds the finest revival of the year, from every standpoint, was William Faversham's splendid presentation of "Julius Caesar."

Excepting the score of ingenious devices revealed by Miss Gates in "The Poor Little Rich Girl," the cleverest playwriting conceit was that observed in "Steve," wherein the sense of wanderlust felt by a young woman living in a mean and cramped Harlem tenement is bred in her and steadily fostered by the singing of songs of the sea by an old sea captain whose shadow she glimpses from time to time on the window curtain of the flat across the areaway. The best piece of wholesomely sentimental writing was, of course, Schnitzler's, in the dialogue called "A Christmas Present," with its beautiful "These flowers, dear little girl, are from someone who might have been as happy as you—if she hadn't been quite such a coward." The following extract will recall the mood of what precedes:

GABRIELLE—What sort of a castle does the princess live in?

ANATOL—Can you imagine a fairy princess in anything but the smartest of drawing rooms?

GABRIELLE (*a little tartly*)—Thank you, I can.

ANATOL—Because this one lives in a little room, with a cheap and nasty wall paper—with a few Christmas numbers hanging about and a white-shaded lamp on her table. You can see the sunset from the window over the roofs and through the chimneys. And in the spring you can almost smell the flowers in a garden across the way. * * *

GABRIELLE—Is she waiting for you now?

ANATOL—Sure to be.

GABRIELLE—What will she say when you come?

ANATOL—Oh, the right thing.

GABRIELLE—She knows your step on the stairs, doesn't she?

ANATOL—I expect so.

GABRIELLE—And goes to the door?

ANATOL—Yes.

GABRIELLE—And puts her arms round your neck, and says—what does she say?

ANATOL—The right thing.

GABRIELLE—What's that?

ANATOL—It's just the right thing to say.

GABRIELLE—What was it yesterday?

ANATOL—It sounds nothing, repeated. I suppose it's the way she says it.

GABRIELLE—I'll imagine that. Tell me the words.

ANATOL—"It is good to have you back again."

In view of the dramatic fertility, as well as the comely writing, of Mr. Sheldon in parts of his play "Romance"—for an example of the latter: "Then why bother? Think of Millefleurs and how we loved it on those nights in May! And it's there now—asleep and empty, like some spell-bound garden—just waiting for the touch of spring—and us—to give it life again"—probably the most deplorable (because the most Sheldonically overdone and dramatically antiquated) scene is to be charged against this exhibit. A sample will suffice:

RITA (*holding a big chair for support*)—If you don't min'—I mus' ask you now to leave me—it is almos' midnight. So good night!

TOM (*staring, wiping his forehead nervously*)—All right—I'm going—yes—I'm going. But first we must pray together. Pray for your soul's salvation!

RITA (*nervously*)—No—go now! I'm in God's 'ands—'E will take care of me.

TOM—Come here! Kneel down! Give me your hands! (*A silence; they look into each other's eyes. Then, in a silent fury of passion, he leans forward, and, in spite of her struggles, draws her up and crushes her in a terrible embrace.*) It's all over—I thought I came here to save you—but I didn't—it was just because I am a man and

you're a woman—and I love you, darling—I love you—I love you more than anything in the world. (*He is kissing her frantically.*)

RITA (*half fainting*)—Oh—

TOM (*with a laugh*)—What a fool I've been! But that's all right—it's not too late—we're here—together—and the night is ours.

RITA (*terrified*)—No—No!

TOM—It's ours—the whole, long, splendid night—it's ours—I tell you—every marvelous minute.

RITA (*struggling*)—Don't—please!—Oh, take away your 'ands—

TOM—I won't—

RITA—It is because I love you! (*Pushing him away from her*)—An' so because I love you—I mus'—save you from yourself!!

As a sample of the original and deft wit of the average foreign music show libretto after it has been made to succumb to the inevitable local treatment, I submit three superior quips from "The Man With Three Wives":

I

Why take your wife to Paris? It's like taking a ham sandwich to a banquet.

II

Do you like champagne?

Yes, but it tastes as if your foot was asleep.

III

Thank you for your photograph. I will always wear it next to my heart. (*Whereupon the gentleman places the photograph in the hip pocket of his trousers.*)

And now, in closing, just one more excerpt from the drama of 1912-1913. It is culled from a play by Edith Sessions Tupper called "The Road to Arcady," produced by one of our numerous organizations having as its purpose the improvement of American dramatic thought. Here, then, is the way American dramatic thought had the light pointed out to it on this especial occasion:

ANTOINETTE (*sobbing*)—I don't know much about mothers. I've never had a mother's love. My mother never put her arms around me and drew me to her breast. I've never heard her voice falter with sympathy, nor felt one throb of her heart. I've been alone, alone with Bobby; we were just two poor little children together, just as much alone as if we had no father or mother; always alone, in a great house—with servants. Father was always at business, and when he came home he was too tired to be bothered. And our mother— Ah, well, I can't talk about it. I need a mother's love—every girl needs it—she's starved without it.

VARIOUS BAD NOVELS

By H. L. Mencken

THIS article, I fear, will strike you as dull, dull stuff—I feel in my bones, indeed, that it is going to be so—but I hope and pray that it will be measurably less dull than the novels it principally deals with. What is more, there is faith behind my prayer, and so I proceed to the business of composition without further apologies or deprecations. In order to save your arm, a humane surgeon saws off your little finger, or even your thumb; in order to buttress you against smallpox, a wise physician gives you cowpox. The reviewer of books, if he would serve his customers well, must sometimes serve them as ruthlessly. In the present case, I bore you with 5,735 words of review, at a cost to you of less than two cents, in order to warn you away from some 1,200,000 words of cheerless, uninspired, machine-made fiction, which would cost you about \$23.50 in the department stores. The 1,200,000 words of fiction I have swallowed myself, deadhead and willingly—a nobler act than the vaccinator's, for he flees from the smallpox as precipitately as his patient. Let the fact be remembered when I get to hell at last, and there take fire from the assembled kidnappers and vice crusaders, the yeggmen and Sunday school superintendents. Let the heat be tempered to the worn reviewer.

So saying, I bring to your notice a dark maroon tome entitled "THE VOICE OF THE HEART," by Margaret Blake (*Dillingham*), in which *Chemical Purity* and the *Scarlet Sin* go to the mat together, and the result is a loud, dusty tussle, a hot, sanguinary scrap. There is no doubt whatever that Betty Garside loves Richard Pryce—the fact is

specifically admitted, indeed, so early as Chapter IV—but whenever she thinks of marriage, she trembles, as Mulvaney used to say, like an asp on a leaf. Men are such coarse creatures, such low, licentious brutes. To sit in the parlor and discuss the *zeitgeist* never contents them: no sooner are the lights turned down than they want to begin hugging and kissing. And after marriage they proceed to even greater and grosser liberties, the character of which sweet Betty can only guess. She guesses accurately enough, however, to set her against them. Unless Richard will promise faithfully to forswear such Babylonish debaucheries, she will never wed him. She has been reading, one fancies, Chapter IX of "Science and Health," by the polyandrous (and perhaps penitent) Mrs. Eddy. She is a race suicidist of the militant wing. She is determined to die a maid.

Naturally enough, Richard objects. In truth, he refuses positively to hear of any such arrangement, and they debate the matter for twenty or thirty pages. In the midst of the discussion, there enters a new lover—to wit, Stanley Earlcote, an enormously rich and rascally fellow. Search the books from end to end, and you will find no more hideous villain than Stanley. There is not "a vestige of color in either his cheeks or his lips, but the tip of his nose is faintly pink." His small greenish-gray eyes have "no brilliancy, but are dull and heavy, like the eyes of a dead fish." This Stanley determines to win Betty by disposing of Richard. Accordingly, he calls in the aid of Katarina della Florenzia, a lady with "scintillating, titillating, twinkling" orbs—and scarcely enough virtue to out-

fit a policeman. In the hands of this fair professor Richard is as a lump of clay. She lures him to her apartment, fascinates him with her "titillating" sparklers, plies him with "caviare and smoked salmon sandwiches and champagne"—and drags him down to infamy. Worse still, she sends him away with something worse than remorse to remember her by. In M. Brioux's eloquent phrase, he becomes "damaged goods." Marriage with Betty is now out of the question.

Reënter the crafty Stanley Earlcote, with his pink nose, his fishy eyes and his great gift for scoundrelism. Having Richard in his power, he now turns to Betty and—but let us cut it short, and have done with this odoriferous nonsense. Richard has to go to the hospital, and Betty must find the money to pay the costs. Earlcote offers her five thousand dollars if she will marry him. She agrees. Five years later she and Richard meet again. He has been cured of his malaise and she has been cured of her chemical purity. So they boldly inform Earlcote that his day of reckoning has come, and after a feeble resistance he surrenders. The divorce obtained, they are married "at eight o'clock in the morning of April 30 . . . at the Little Church Around the Corner"—a gratuitous crime against that long-suffering tabernacle. As they leave the church, a messenger boy hands them a letter from Earlcote—a letter running to eleven hundred words and ending with the following beautiful thoughts:

I have not much longer to live. Mock me, if you will. I deride myself. But it is better to sweep the heart clean of hate than to nurture it, for hatred, as I have learned, hurts not him who is hated so much as him who hates. Perhaps, after all, my motives in this singular affair are purely selfish. . . . I was ever a prince of egoists.

Is it possible to imagine any more witless, preposterous bosh—any more puerile, overladen nastiness? And yet such garbage is pouring from the presses day in and day out, and multitudes of the feeble-minded seem to read it and enjoy it. Much the same note is struck in "THE WHITE SHRINE," by Gerald Villiers-Stuart (*McClurg*), though here the uncleanness is far less assertive. Etherea

Vaughan, author of pretty best-sellers, has been carrying on an affair with David Waldorfe for a long while before she discovers that he is married. When he tells her at last, it is as overture to the news that his wife is suing him for divorce, and that Etherea is named as correspondent. But with the news he brings a way out. If Etherea will fork over ten thousand dollars, no doubt his wife will forget it. Alas, Etherea hasn't the money! How to acquire it? The ingenious Waldorfe at once suggests a plan. If she will abandon sweet romance for a time, and give her publishers a novel of "daringly salacious qualities," the money will come rolling in forthwith. He himself will even help her to write it. He has talents in that direction; he will put in the genuinely hot stuff; he will enchant the high school girls. . . . I leave the rest to your own inspection, but recommend that you do not inspect it. The thing is spun out to 336 pages of small print and is made up of one absurdity after another. Unlike "The Voice of the Heart," it is written in reasonably coherent English, and even shows a few feeble attempts at epigram. But for all that unusual elegance, it remains very tedious rubbish, and in warning you away from it I rescue you from certain boredom.

Scarcely less stupid are most of the more virtuous books of the month—for example, "PARROT & Co.," by Harold MacGrath (*Bobbs-Merrill*); "THE UPHILL CLIMB," by B. M. Bower (*Little-Brown*), and "THE CREEPING TIDES," by Kate Jordan (*Little-Brown*). The MacGrath confection deals with the amours of Elsa Chetwood, "a society girl, very wealthy, but something of a snob." Elsa is in love with Arthur Ellison, a rich and polished young New Yorker, but instead of marrying him and having done with it, she goes touring to the Far East. There, on an Irrawaddy steamer, she meets another fellow. At the start she is attracted to him by his strange resemblance to Arthur, but soon she sees that he is a vastly superior creature, and so she begins loving him on his own account. But he is under a cloud: he can't go back to the States. She

wonders what he has done; and being a young woman of initiative, proceeds to cross-examine him. Thus:

Q. Have you ever done anything that would conscientiously forbid you to speak to a young unmarried woman?

A. No. I haven't been that kind of a man. I could look into my mother's eyes without any sense of shame, if that is what you mean.

Q. Your mother is living?

A. Yes. But I haven't seen her in ten years.

That is all that Elsa learns on page 58, but back on page 302 the whole truth comes out. Arthur and the fascinating stranger, it appears, are actually brothers. Arthur stole eight thousand dollars and Brother Hero took the blame. Hence his long exile. Hence his meeting with Elsa on the Irrawaddy. Hence this latest volume of Macgrathian balderdash. MacGrath has never done anything worse. Very few other men, living or dead, have ever done anything so bad.

In Mr. Bower's book we are introduced to Ford Campbell, a stage cowboy of bibulous habits. One day he goes to town, immerses himself in alcohol—and awakes next morning to find himself married! To a houri of the dance halls? To a low, vile creature? Not at all. The bride, according to the half-blind friends who assisted at the nuptials, was a young woman of very decent aspect. But now she has disappeared. Who was she? Where is she? Ford himself is long in the dark, but the battered novel reader begins to have a shrewd suspicion on page 69, when a beautiful young lady named Josephine Melby invades the scene and essays to rescue our hero from the Rum Demon. And on page 278 it all comes out. Josephine, it appears, mistook Ford for a gentleman named Frank Ford Cameron, who was doomed to lose a fortune unless he married her by a certain day. But now she ceases bothering about this Mr. Cameron and goes to light housekeeping with Mr. Campbell, who has been in love with her since page 73, and whom she has loved in turn since page 202.

The heroine of "The Creeping Tides" is the wife and dupe of a counterfeiter, and has but lately escaped from prison when the story opens. Her name is Mrs.

Fanny King, alias Mrs. Barrett. When she buries herself in Greenwich Village, hoping thus to elude the relentless catch-polls of the law, the first person she meets is Lieut. John Cross, a wounded soldier. John has done great deeds in the Philippines, and the folk at Washington are all for making him a captain, but he will have none of their rewards and praises. Why? Because there is a canker eating at his heart. Because he stands in the shadow of an old disgrace. Because he was once cashiered from the British army for cowardice. (He was a Briton before he began to fight for Uncle Sam.) Well, well, well! A sorry kettle of fish! But in the end, of course, the fish change into marshmallows and wedding cake, and all is well. Fanny's felonious husband dies; John gets a pardon for her from the President (who is very polite to him); the British War Office expunges the old charge of cowardice from the records, and one of the curates at Grace Church earns a bit of *trinkgeld*. "It's just like a story," says Someone-or-Other on page 354. Like a story, indeed—and like an extraordinarily clumsy, ridiculous and dull one.

Five novels so far, and all of them unmitigated bosh. Five more, and every one as boshy. They are "THE GAY REBELLION," by Robert W. Chambers (*Appleton*); "MR. HOBBY," by Harold Kellock (*Century Co.*); "THE DREAM GIRL," by Ethel Gertrude Hart (*Double-day-Page*); "THE SUTTEE OF SAFA," by Dulcie Deamer (*Dillingham*); and "THE LAND OF THE SPIRIT," by Thomas Nelson Page (*Scribner*). Add three to the ten and make it a baker's dozen: "THE FEAR OF LIVING," by Henry Bordeaux (*Dutton*); "DEVOTA," by Augusta Evans Wilson (*Dillingham*), and "LORE OF PROSERPINE," by Maurice Hewlett (*Scribner*). I open "The Gay Rebellion" at page 26 and encounter the following singularly witty dialogue:

"It startled me. How did I know what it might have been? It might have been a bear—"

"Or a cow."

"You talk," said Sayre angrily, "like William Dean Howells! Haven't you *any* romance in you?"

"Not what *you* call romance. Pass the flap-jacks."

Sayre passed them.

"My attention," he said, "instantly became riveted upon the bushes. I strove to pierce them with a piercing glance. Suddenly—"

"Sure! 'Suddenly' always comes next."

"Suddenly . . . the leaves were stealthily parted, and—"

"A naked savage in full war paint—"

"Naked nothing! A young girl in . . . a perfectly fitting gown stepped noiselessly out."

"Out of what, you gink?"

"The bushes, dammit! . . . She looked at me; I gazed at her. Somehow—"

"In plainer terms, she gave you the eye. What?"

"That's a peculiarly coarse observation."

"Then tell it in your own way."

"I will. The sunlight fell softly upon the trees of the ancient wood—"

"Woodn't that bark you!"

And so on and so on, for page after page. Can you imagine any more brilliant and bubbly stuff—"pierce" and "piercing"—"you gink!"—"she gave you the eye"—"Woodn't that bark you!" No doubt Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Oscar Wilde, sitting in gehenna together, exchange such super-humorous badinage by the hour, with Dean Swift and Sydney Smith contributing occasional cracks, and ten thousand devils doubled up with mirth in the gallery. I commend the book to all persons who enjoy the repartee of gashouse comedians in small-time vaudeville, and are convulsed by the whimsicalities of *Puck* and *Judge*. Such masterpieces are rare. The last was Joe Miller's Joke Book.

"Mr. Hobby" and "The Dream Girl" are sentimental tales which forcibly suggest jars full of pink and white stick candy, and so they need not detain us more than a moment. The former is remarkable for the fact that the hero is called Henry Dulworthy on page 27, calls himself Robert Dulworthy on page 46, and finally settles down as Henry on page 91. There may be some reason for these changes, but if there is I must leave you to find it for yourself, for all the while I read the book my mind wandered hopelessly—to girls I loved far back in the nineties, to long-forgotten journeys, crimes and suits of clothes, to the day I was seasick in the Windward Passage, to the tulip fields below Utrecht, to Huxley's essays, to the German schoolmaster who used to pull my

teeth, to Huck Finn's visit to the circus, to the scarlet branches on my family tree, to Fenimore Cooper, Papa Haydn, Johann Most and Hannah More—to any and everything save the amour of Henry-Robert-Henry Dulworthy and the beautiful Rose Allingham. On page 333, as Henry-Robert-Henry finishes its chronicle, Rose "rushes in and leans over" his chair, patting his cheek and "taking remarkable liberties" with his hair, so that it is "with the greatest difficulty" that he can steady himself "to pen these last few lines." Ah, blest reminder of lost Victorian romances! Ah, sweet, sweet echo of earlier, happier, softer days!

I pass over the saccharine love-making of "The Dream Girl" and the dime novel thrills of "The Suttee of Safa," and proceed to the piffish sentimentality of "The Land of the Spirit," by Thomas Nelson Page. "Possibly the most notable one change in our national life in the last decades," says Mr. Page in his preface, "is the deepening of its note." For example, from the heroic idealism of John Brown to the dirty snouting and woman-hounding of the Vice Crusade. For example, from the man's job of conquering the wilderness to solemn mountebankerries of the Bull Moose messiahs and the Men and Religion Forward Movement. Of the seven stories in the book, two are pious parables in the manner of Charles Rann Kennedy, and a third is a frank attempt to rewrite the story of the Nativity, as told in Luke II, 4-21, and Matthew II, 13-14. Mr. Page must believe that his Revised Version is an improvement, else he would not print it. But very few readers, I venture to opine, will agree with him in this belief. The story of the Nativity, true enough, is not so well told in the New Testament as the story of the Passion. Matthew leaves out the shepherds and the manger, Luke leaves out the wise men, and John and Mark leave out everything. But these leavings out are not nearly so irritating as Mr. Page's impertinent puttings in. All he has accomplished by his devout labor is to reduce one of the sublimely beautiful stories of the world to the bromidic level

of a romance in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. His offense against good literature and good taste is a serious one, and he lacks entirely the excuse of Renan and Strauss, for he brings neither scholarship nor imagination, nor any sense of poetry to the enterprise. If the whole New Testament were rewritten as he has here rewritten one chapter, it would be the dulllest book since Hinds's "Precedents of the House of Representatives." And all the other stories in the volume are bad too. It is, indeed, a miserable performance for a man of Mr. Page's reputation. To find its match for vacuity one must go to Henry Van Dyke's "The Unknown Quantity."

"The Fear of Living," by Henry Bordeaux, is introduced with a flourish of trumpets as something "new and daring." In reality, it is a stupid moral tract in favor of patriotism, prolificacy, sentimental self-sacrifice and all other such virtues of the chandala. In its original French form, it appeared so long ago as 1902, and the "strenuous life" philosophy of Colonel Roosevelt, then much discussed in France, seems to have inspired it. But too often M. Bordeaux converts the healthy courage of the Roosevelt scheme into a sickly sort of altruism, indistinguishable from the *sklav-moral* denounced by Nietzsche. His heroine, Mme. Guibert, is a chronic martyr. First she allows her husband to throw away all his money upon a bankrupt brother; then she allows him to sacrifice his life to ingrates; then she sends two sons out to the pestiferous swamps of Saigon; then she sends a third to his death in Algiers; and finally she surrenders her last remaining child, a daughter, and goes into a gloomy provincial boarding house to end her days. Is all this a brave "acceptance" of life? I doubt it. To me it seems more like silly resignationism. Such suicidal sacrifices seldom do any good. Even in this present fable they do no good. As she passes from the scene, one can envy Mme. Guibert no more than one can envy Jennie Gerhardt—and so the moral of the tale falls flat. That it made a sensation in France I can well believe: the French are not used to such brum-

magem pieties in their serious fiction. But that it is a work of art, or even a work of sound sense, I must respectfully deny. On the contrary, it is merely a tedious Sunday school book, as far from reality as "Soldiers of Fortune" or "The Duchess," and as smug and preposterous as Zola's "Fécondité."

What "WIDECOMBE FAIR," by Eden Phillpotts (*Little-Brown*), is about I do not presume to tell you, for I have not read it and never shall. Phillpotts is one of the few novelists I cannot read, trying my angelic darndest, and every six months or so I have to make apologies for my infirmity. As a peace offering to his admirers, I quote the following from the sagacious Boston *Evening Transcript*: "Every page contributes a new idea to our understanding of human nature; every chapter is in itself the germ of a long story. . . . It is a bigger, and perhaps more massive thing than any of its predecessors." So with "THE MATING OF LYDIA," by Mrs. Humphry Ward (*Doubleday-Page*), a respectable, well-appearing fiction of some five hundred pages, bound in Nile green. I note that the heroine's name is Lydia Penfold, that the principal hero is Claude Faversham (possibly a brother to William), and that there is a heavy father called Edmund Melrose; but on attempting to read further I am deviled by vagrant and irrelevant thoughts. Therefore I hoist a signal of distress, and am rescued fraternally by the reviewer of the learned New York *Times*, who says that Lydia is "very girlish and human" and that "one is glad on taking leave of her to feel that her mating will probably be happy and successful." And from the same colleague I learn that Faversham "does the absolutely proper thing according to tradition" (*i. e.*, marries the girl?), and that the book, as a whole, "is rich in that atmosphere of culture and good breeding which is peculiar to Mrs. Ward." Here, alas, I must raise a feeble voice in dissent. An atmosphere of "culture and good breeding" is not "peculiar to Mrs. Ward"—that is, if "peculiar" means "belonging particularly or exclusively to a person," as the Standard Dictionary says. There is just as much of it, if not

more, in the works of Gertrude Atherton and Richard Harding Davis.

"Lore of Proserpine," by Maurice Hewlett, is called a "book of fiction" by the publishers, but Hewlett himself, in his preface, hints that it is chiefly autobiographical. In any case, it is an infantile collection of stories about fairies and oreads, written with all the deadly seriousness of a report by the Society for Psychical Research. Hewlett's customary humor is missing and the customary charm of his style is missing: it is a stupid volume. Stupid, too, are most of the stories in "FARO NELL AND HER FRIENDS," by Alfred Henry Lewis (*Dillingham*), not because they lack efforts at brightness, but because their brightness is too often obviously artificial. Of the picturesque, syncopated style of Mr. Lewis I am a hearty admirer, but it loses four-fifths of its incisiveness and plausibility when it comes out of the mouths of his characters. More stupid is "DEVOTA," by the late Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson, a stilted romance in her characteristic manner. But the book is saved by an appendix of "biographical reminiscences" by T. C. DeLeon, an eminent critic of the Confederate States, who argues that Mrs. Evans was "the most remarkable woman of the century just passed." Mr. DeLeon gives warning that he makes this statement, "not from impulse, not from personal friendship of near a lifetime's duration, still less from any sectional prejudice veering toward her Southern birth, nurture and voluntary residence," but because he "believes it absolutely true" and because it is "as clearly proved and provable as it is true." Unluckily for posterity, he fails to give the proofs, but he makes up for the oversight by dropping many artless hints about his own literary feats and standing. He is the author, it appears, of "Rock and Rye" and of a burlesque on "Hamlet" which once ran for one hundred nights in New York. But away with such vanities! It is as a critic that the Hon. Mr. DeLeon must live and shine.

And now, to make an end of the novels, brief mention for five of finer metal—not masterpieces, nor even secure second-

raters, but things infinitely above the vapid stuff I have been leading you through. They are "THE RIGHT OF THE STRONGEST," by Frances Nimmo Greene (*Scribner*), a sympathetic and painstaking picture of Alabama mountain folk; "AMERICAN NOBILITY," by Pierre de Coulevain (*Dutton*), an acute study of international marriage; "THE WEAKER VESSEL," by E. F. Benson (*Dodd-Mead*); "VIRGINIA," by Ellen Glasgow (*Double-day-Page*), and "THE CATFISH," by Charles Marriott (*Bobbs-Merrill*). The Benson story is the best of them, for it starts off in the deliciously satirical manner of "Mrs. Ames," but toward the end it grows very serious, and so it rather falls between two manners. But even so, you will get civilized entertainment out of it, for Mr. Benson is always full of penetrating and waggish observations, and his charm never fails. "Virginia" would be better if it had either more or less to do with Virginians. As it is, the author's portrayal of their peculiarities is incommenced by the story of Jinny Pendleton's adventures with her very un-Virginian husband, who deserts her for an actress, and the story of those adventures is made a bit unreal by its background. But the book is well written, as novels go in our fair land, and some of its minor characters are fragrant of the Old South. "The Catfish" deals with the life of George Tracy, an Englishman, from the cradle to the altar, and is a serious and ambitious piece of writing. But at the end, it seems to me, Mr. Marriott leaves George unexplained. All the same, the tale has life in it, and you will not nap over it.

So much for the novels that have come to me this month—five mildly good ones and sixteen bad ones, not to mention the half-dozen so wholly bad that I haven't even mentioned them. My advice to you, if you yearn for fiction on these lazy afternoons, is that you pass over all of them, and go to the better things of yesteryear. Have you ever read "McTeague," by Frank Norris? You have heard a lot about it, of course, and maybe, in the amiable American style, you have *talked* a lot about it, but have you ever read it? If not, then read it forth-

with: you can get it for fifty cents. And if you *have* read it, then read it again: it is worth it. I do not say the same of Norris's other work—barring, perhaps, "Blix," an excellent sentimental comedy, a thing of young love and honest kisses. "The Pit," when I last looked into it, failed of its old thrill, and "The Octopus" bored me with its far-fetched mysticism. So with "A Man's Woman," "Moran of the Lady Letty" and the short stories in "A Deal in Wheat": I fear that their day is already done. But "McTeague" remains—a truly distinguished piece of writing, a wonderfully painstaking and conscientious study of a third rate man, a permanent and valuable contribution to our national literature. I do not think that Mr. Howells has ever done anything more American, or anything more worthy. Certainly you will find no match for it in the work of Mrs. Wharton, not forgetting "Ethan Frome," nor in the work of Prof. Herrick, nor in that of Mr. Churchill, nor in that of Miss Johnston. Its one indubitable rival is "Sister Carrie"—and both suffer, curiously enough, from the same fault: a lack of unity in design. Both have their backs broken in the middle. Each is made up of two stories, ineptly welded together. Each reveals a great talent not yet quite sure of itself.

A number of other American books, much talked of a dozen years ago, suggest themselves for re-reading. One of them is Stephen Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage," a story greatly overpraised at the start and now undeservedly neglected. I haven't seen a copy in a bookstore for three or four years. But it is still well worth reading, and so are all of Crane's other war stories—for example, those in the volume entitled "The Little Regiment." Even better are the three little masterpieces in "The Monster," and particularly "The Blue Hotel," a grotesque, sardonic, memorable tale—one, indeed, that Joseph Conrad might have written. It is a long, long while since I last read it, but I still see clearly the wild snowstorm in that lonely prairie town, and the cerulean ugliness of the Palace Hotel, and the

offhand, incomprehensible doing to death of the nameless Swede. Crane got something rare and difficult into that modest story, and that was the sense of brooding disaster, of cruel and immutable fate, of the eternal meaninglessness of life—in five words, tragedy in the Greek sense. He got the same note into "The Monster," that incomparable tale of horror, and into many of his war stories, whether of fiction or of fact. Poe usually missed it: most of his tragedies are merely melodramas. But you will find it running from end to end of Joseph Conrad. "Heart of Darkness" is as real a tragedy as "The Seven Against Thebes." So is "Lord Jim." So is "Falk." So, for that matter, is "Almayer's Folly."

Which leads me to recommend Conrad to you again, with an apology if I bore you with too many references to him. If you do not know him at all, you can do no better than begin with "Youth," perhaps the best short story ever written in English. Here, indeed, is the perfect short story—a veritable slice of life, the picture of a soul on trial, the drama of Everyman upon a superbly mounted stage—a tale inimitably succinct, sympathetic, archetypal and penetrating. Believe me, the best of Kipling might borrow something from "Youth." The best of Kipling was done while Kipling still had youth himself. It is full of the jauntiness of youth, the charm of youth, the high hope of youth—but it is also full of the blindness of youth. Conrad wrote when he was already a man of middle age—a man looking back, with joy and a clear understanding, upon the memorable moods and gropings of those far-off but unforgotten days. The result is that his story is not merely a chronicle of youth but also an interpretation of youth. It illuminates a universal experience, here lifted to pulsing drama, by the light of a profound philosophy. To read it is, in some sense, to live again. And that, I think, is the highest praise that can be laid upon a work of the imagination.

Bound in the same volume with "Youth" are two other magnificent short stories, "Heart of Darkness" and "The End of the Tether," both unutter-

ably tragic and both written with such supreme art that all criticism must be silent before them. One cannot describe such stories: as well attempt to describe the last movement of the Fifth Symphony. All three show an elephantine lack of form, a Jovian disdain of all the ancient conventions of story telling. "Youth" is a story within a story—a clumsy device, here made more clumsy by the obvious absence of all necessity for it. "Heart of Darkness" carries the same burden. "The End of the Tether" starts in the middle and then goes onward in both directions. But once you get the swing of Conrad, you will lose all sense of these awkwardnesses. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the matter, by canons made and provided, that is the way he writes—and that is the way he writes masterpieces. A detailed account of the technical errors and absurdities in "Lord Jim" would fill another book of its size, but "Lord Jim" remains nearly perfect nevertheless. And for all its amazing slowness of tempo, its baffling halts and interlardings, the effect of "Typhoon" is that of stupendous and appalling action, of a huge play of irresistible forces, of a leaping, living thing. Such is the magic of this Mr. Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, "late master in the merchant service." At the start, I dare say, you may miss some of it. Its very strangeness requires some degree of preparation, of initiation. But soon or late, I believe and hope, it will grip you and overwhelm you.

But let me have done with Conrad and suggest a few more books before I close. Why not Henry James's "What Maisie Knew"—a perfect comedy, a riotous and delightful piece of Olympian foolery—and happily free from Mr. James's more recondite snarls of speech. It is worth a dozen best-sellers of the current crop. It has more good fun in it, and more shrewdness, and more civilized entertainment than all the masterworks of the Athertons and Sinclairs, the Hericks and Frank Danbys, the Phillpotts and Mrs. Humphry Wards, taken together. It is a first rate piece of writing by a first rate man. So is Kip-

ling's "Kim": you will like it on second reading better than on first reading, and still better on third reading. So is George Moore's "Evelyn Innes," not to mention his "Sister Theresa." Have you ever read his "Memoirs of my Dead Life"—not the bowdlerized American edition, but the English edition? If not, go order it from your bookseller. It is out of print and growing rare. A copy will cost you \$7.50. It is worth at least \$7.60. You will find thirteen stories in it, half fiction and half fact—and at least four of them are worthy to rank with the best of our day. Read "The Lovers of Orelay." If you are a sinner, it will ease your conscience. If you are a saint, it will cure you.

And Zola's "Germinal," and Moore's "A Mummer's Wife," and Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt," and Max Beerbohm's "Zuleika Dobson," and Bennett's "Whom God Hath Joined," and George Ade's "In Babel," and Sudermann's "The Indian Lily," and Bojer's "The Power of a Lie," and London's "The Call of the Wild," and Meredith's unfinished "Celt and Saxon"—all good books, too little praised, too little read. They will fill your holidays with delight; they will give you pleasant memories. And "Huckleberry Finn"—I was almost forgetting "Huckleberry Finn"! What? You have read it? Of course you have! But such books are not sent into the world to be read once. As well read the Book of Mark once, or "Hamlet," or "Alice in Wonderland"! I myself have read old "Huck"—but I won't tell you the number of times. I pull down the frayed volume every spring and read it again. I have been doing it every spring since I was nine years old. I expect to be doing it down the slippered sixties, into the rheumatic seventies. I enjoy it more every year. I wouldn't trade that one book—it is a genuine First Edition!—for the whole works of Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton and Nathaniel Hawthorne, plus Dr. Eliot's five-foot shelf, plus the Encyclopedia Britannica, plus the Koran and the Zend-Avesta, plus all the best-sellers done in Indiana since the Mexican War.

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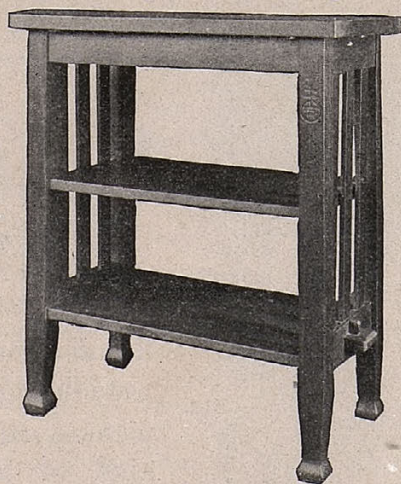


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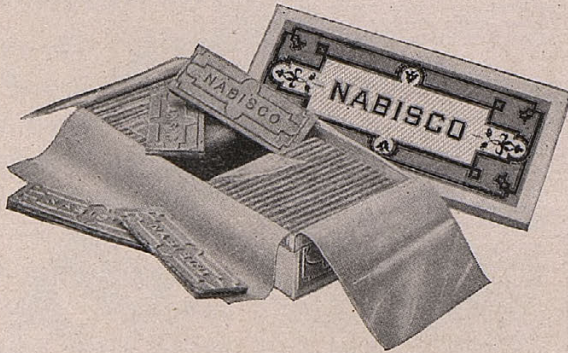
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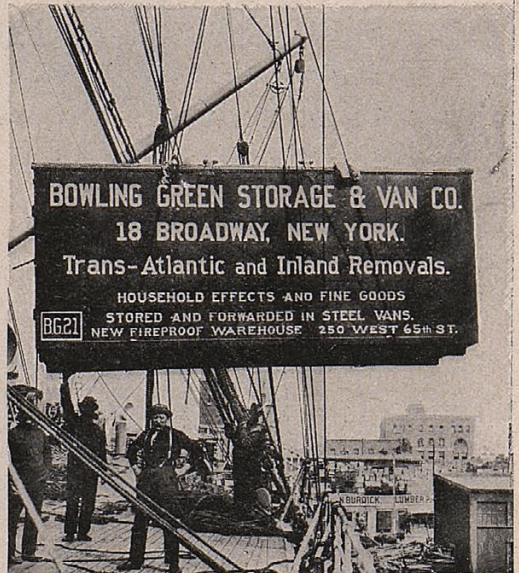
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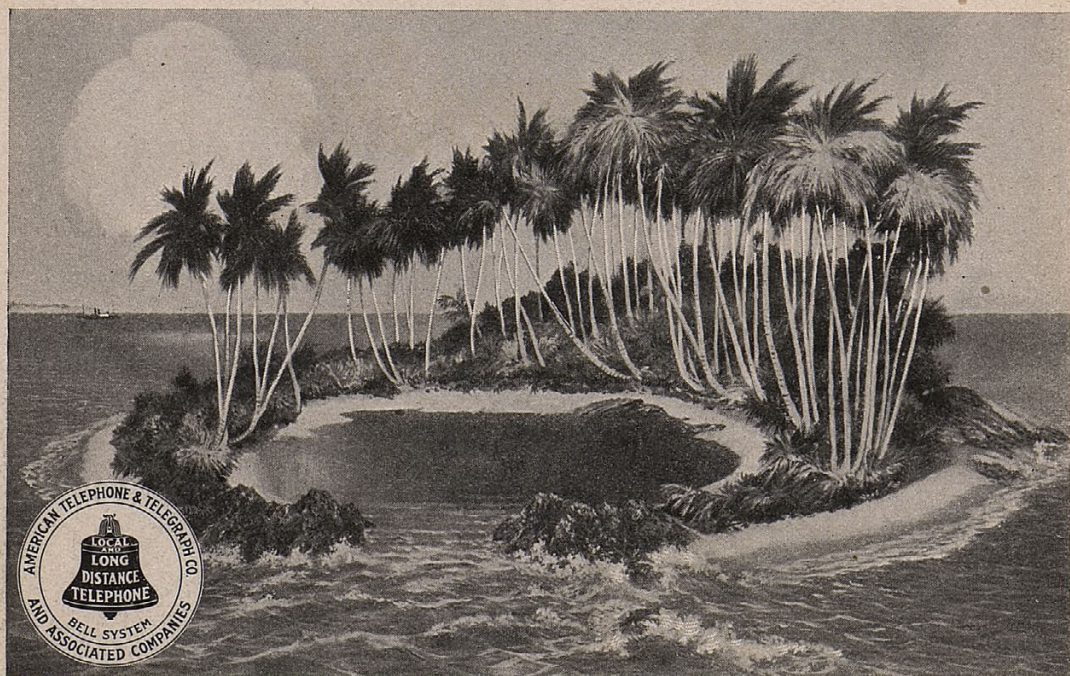
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